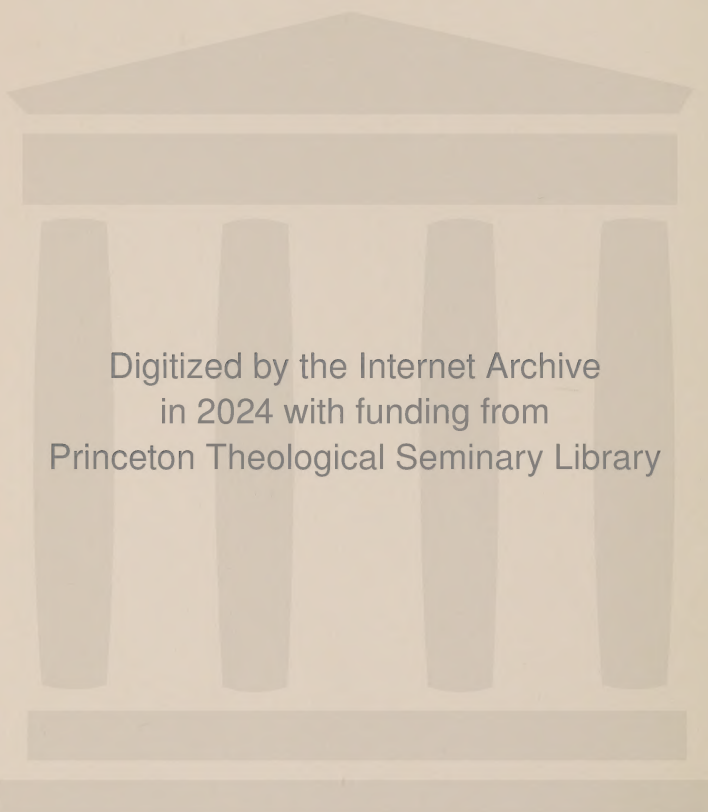
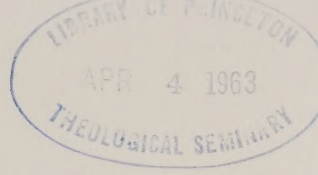


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AL-AZHAR



Al-Azhar

A Millennium of Muslim Learning

by ✓
BAYARD DODGE

THE MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE
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1961

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Foreword

The purpose of this book is to give a reader who does not know Arabic information about the most famous institution of the Muslim world and the Islamic culture, which developed in the Muslim lands while Latin culture was maturing in Europe. The study does not aim to be a critique of Muslim culture or al-Azhar itself, but is an attempt to interpret these subjects from the Muslim point of view.

I am grateful to the Rector of al-Azhar, the Deans of the three Colleges, the Director of the Religious Institutes, the Chief of the Medical Service and the Librarian of al-Azhar for the help which they have given me. I am also indebted to Dr. Mohamed al-Bahay and his associate, Hammūdah 'Abd al-'Āṭī for correcting my description of al-Azhar as it exists today.*

My book was written while I was a member of the faculty of the American University at Cairo and I greatly appreciate all that was done for me by the members of the administration and teaching staff of that institution.

Three professors of Cairo University helped me in a very generous way. Dr. Mohamed Kamel Hussain went over the material on the Fāṭimids, Professor Mustafa Ziade corrected the chapter on the Mamlūks, and Dr. Mohamed Shafik Ghorbal gave me valuable criticisms in connection with the Ottoman period and the nineteenth century. The scholars in charge of the manuscript department of the League of Arab States and many other authorities helped me so much to obtain books and information that I feel exceedingly grateful to them.

While living in Cairo I have been impressed both by the intellectual activity of the city and by the kindness which the scholars lavish on a visitor who seeks their help.

BAYARD DODGE

* In this foreword the names are written as they are spelled in Latin characters by the persons mentioned, rather than in accordance with the transliteration system used elsewhere in the book.

Transliteration

System of Transliteration from Arabic to English

bā'	b	zāy	z	fā'	f
tā'	t	sīn	s	qāf	q
thā'	th	shīn	sh	kāf	k
jīm	j	ṣād	ṣ	lām	l
hā'	h	ḍād	ḍ	mīm	m
khā'	kh	ṭā'	ṭ	nūn	n
dāl	d	zā'	z	hā'	h
dhāl	dh	‘ayn	‘	wāw	w
rā'	r	ghayn	gh	yā'	y

Alif as a long vowel or maqṣūrah, ā

Vowels and diphthongs

Fathah (short)	a,	(long)	ā
Kasrah	“	ī	“
Dammah	“	u	“
Fathah	–	wāw, aw	
“		yā', ay	

Shaddah is indicated by a doubling of the consonant, but with kasrah-yā' is written as in Ismā'īlīyah.

The definite article is not written with a capital, except at the beginning of a sentence. The nisbah is written, ī.

Final hā' is written with an *h* rather than a *t* except when it is in construct state.

Unless they occur at the beginning of a sentence, words like *abū* and *ibn* are written with small letters. They are also connected with the names following them by hyphens.

The Fāṭimid Caliphs

909- 934	al-Mahdī
934- 946	al-Qā'im
946- 952	al-Manṣūr
952- 975	al-Mu'izz
969	Jawhar invaded Egypt and founded al-Qāhirah (Cairo).
972	the Mosque of al-Azhar completed.
975- 996	al-'Azīz
988	Higher education established at al-Azhar in an organized way.
996-1021	al-Ḥākīm
1021-1035	al-Zāhir
1035-1094	al-Mustanṣir
1094-1101	al-Musta'li
1095	the First Crusade.
1101-1130	al-Āmir
1130-1149	al-Ḥāfiẓ
	Maqṣūrat Fāṭimah built at al-Azhar.
1149-1154	al-Zāfir
1154-1160	al-Fā'iz
1160-1171	al-'Āḍid

CHAPTER I

Al-Azhar and the Fāṭimid Caliphate

The Founding of al-Azhar

DURING the year 970 A.D. a Fāṭimid general started to construct al-Azhar to serve as the assembly mosque of a new dynasty, which was competing with the Caliphs of Baghdād for control of the Muslim world. In order to appreciate the significance of this new building, it is necessary to recall the events preceding its erection.

Not long after the Prophet Muḥammad's death, his followers formed two opposing parties. The members of one of them were called the Sunnites, or *Ahl al-Sunnah*. They were responsible for the Umayyad Dynasty, which ruled the Muslim world from 661 to 750, with Damascus as the capital. The 'Abbāsīd Caliphs, who established a new dynasty in 750 and built Baghdād to serve as their principal seat of government, were also Sunnites. The members of the opposition party were called Shī'ites, or *Ahl al-Shi'ah*, whose leader in each generation was an *Imām*, chosen from among the lineal descendants of the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah. The *Imām* was inevitably a pretender to the throne, claiming the right to rule in the place of the Sunni Caliph.

When the sixth Shī'ite *Imām* died in 765, the Shī'ites themselves split into two divisions. The members of one party came to be called the *Twelvers*, whose most conspicuous chief in the modern world is the Shāh of Irān. The members of the other group were known as *Seveners*, or *Ismā'ilīyah*; their best known leader at the present time being the Āghā Khān.¹

During the centuries preceding the Crusades the *Ismā'ilīyah* organized an underground movement, which almost wrecked the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate. One of the most important developments of this conspiracy was a revolution in North Africa, where the Berber tribes were incited to rebel. In 902 a young leader of the *Ismā'ilīyah* took advantage of this unrest by going in disguise from his headquarters at Salamīyah in Syria to the region of

1. *Muslim World*, October 1959.

modern Tunis, where the tribesmen were ready to receive him. After gaining control of the local government² he proclaimed himself as the true Caliph of Islām and the rival of the 'Abbāsīd Caliph at Baghdād. He assumed the honorary title of *al-Mahdī*³ and a hundred miles south of Tunis built a palace city called al-Mahdiyyah.

When he died in 934, al-Mahdī left behind him a new dynasty of rulers, called by the historians *al-Fāṭimīyūn*,⁴ or Fāṭimids, because they traced their lineage from the Prophet's daughter, Fāṭimah. It was because of this lineage that they claimed that they themselves rather than the 'Abbāsīds were the true successors⁵ of Muḥammad, with a sacred trust to rule the theocracy of Islām.

In order to make this world-wide rule effective they needed a center, which was more convenient than their capital in North Africa. Since what we think of today as Cairo was the military headquarters for Egypt, Syria, Palestine and parts of Arabia, it is not surprising that they wished to occupy the Nile Valley.

The fourth Caliph of the Fāṭimid dynasty was a ruler known as al-Mu'izz, who reigned from 952 to 975 and expanded his realm as far west as the Atlantic. While he was enjoying prosperity in North Africa, a serious crisis occurred in Egypt, partly due to the collapse of the local government and partly to epidemic and inflation. The historian ibn-Khallikān recorded that "A great rise in the cost of living and a plague occurred in Egypt, so that at least six hundred thousand persons died in Egypt and its provinces."⁶

Al-Suyūṭī explained what happened more clearly when he said that "There was nobody left in Egypt to gather hearts to himself. So when this news reached al-Mu'izz . . . in Africa, he dispatched his father's client Jawhar the Greek commander, with a hundred thousand soldiers, who invaded Egypt on Tuesday the seventeenth of Sha'bān in the year three hundred and fifty-eight" (969 A.D.).⁷

The Caliph al-Mu'izz learned about the crisis in Egypt from a high official named ibn-Killis, who fled from the jealousy of a superior officer and the lack of security in the Nile Valley, in

2. The autonomous dynasty founded by Ibrāhīm ibn-al-Aghlab.

3. The expected Messiah of Islām.

4. See list of the caliphs at the beginning of the chapter.

5. Caliphs or *al-Khulafā'*.

6. Khallikān (*Wafayāt*) Vol. II, p. 102; (*Biog. Dict.*) Vol. III, p. 379.

7. Suyūṭī, Part II, p. 13.

order to join the Fāṭimid court in North Africa. Ibn-Killis will be mentioned again, as he was largely responsible for starting higher education at al-Azhar.

The famous officer named Jawhar, whom the Caliph placed in charge of his army of invasion, was born about 912. He was nicknamed al-Siqillī, because he was either born or brought up in Sicily, and he was also called *al-Kātib*, because he served as a secretary before he was placed in charge of the army. Choosing as his standard a white flag, in contrast to the black flag of the 'Abbāsids, Jawhar brought his army of Berber tribesmen to Alexandria and seized the seaport without difficulty. When he reached what is now Cairo,⁸ he did not quarter his rough soldiers in the crowded parts of the old city, but built a new military enclosure called *al-Madīnah al-Qāhirah al-Mu'izzīyah*,⁹ eventually abbreviated to *al-Qāhirah* and pronounced by Europeans as *le Caire* or *Cairo*. Around this new quarter he built a moat and brick wall for defense. The enclosure was divided by a central avenue,¹⁰ on the east side of which a great fortified palace was constructed for the caliph. Each Berber tribe of soldiers was assigned a camping ground and to the south of the palace Jawhar chose a location for the center of worship, which came to be known as al-Azhar.

It is not certain why the new capital was called *al-Qāhirah*, or the *Conquering*. According to a tradition of the Ismā'ilī community in Syria, as well as to the record of an Arab historian,¹¹ the city was named the *Conquering*, because it was intended to form a base for conquering the 'Abbāsids and uniting the Islamic lands under Fāṭimid rule. There is a more popular tradition that when General Jawhar started to build the new city he arranged for his astrologers to pull a cord, so as to signal when the auguries were favorable. When a crow perched on the cord the people nicknamed the city *al-Karīḥah*, or *Bad Luck*, but later al-Mu'izz changed the pronunciation to *al-Qāhirah*. Still another story is that when the city was being built the planet Mars, *al-Qāhir*, was in the ascent. The astrologers, therefore, wishing to respect the augury, persuaded the caliph to call the city after the planet.

Even before the palace was completed, Jawhar started to erect

8. The old parts of Cairo were al-Fuṣṭāṭ, al-'Askar and al-Quṭa'ī.

9. "The Conquering City of al-Mu'izz."

10. *Qaṣabat al-Qāhirah*, running south from Bāb al-Futūḥ to Bāb Zuwaylah.

11. *Qalqashandī*, Vol. III, p. 349. For other traditions see Taghrī-Birdī, Vol. IV, pp. 34, 35. Creswell (*Egypt*), Vol. I, pp. 21-23.

a mosque for the new capital. The original name was the *Mosque of Cairo*,¹² but about a century after his time a new name took the place of the older one. This new name was the *Mosque of al-Azhar* and in order to avoid confusion the building will be referred to as *al-Azhar*.

The construction was begun on a Saturday during April, 970, and completed on June 22, 972.¹³ In the dome above the arches there was the following inscription:

In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate; according to the command for its building from the servant of Allāh, His governor abū-Tamīm Ma'add, the Imām al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh, Amīr al-Mu'minīn, for whom and his illustrious forefathers and his sons may there be the blessing of Allāh: by the hand of his servant Jawhar, the Secretary, the Siqillī, in the year 360.¹⁴

The long name and honorary title in this inscription refer to the Fāṭimid Caliph. Jawhar was called the Secretary and al-Siqillī, because of his origin and early career, as has already been explained.

Al-Azhar represented something more than a local place of worship; it was also an assembly mosque or *jāmi'*.¹⁵ In mediaeval times, when a Muslim general conquered a territory and established a garrison town, he built an official *jāmi'* for assembly and worship. It was in this building that the commander preached and gave out proclamations during the Friday prayers. Several times a week there would be court sessions in the colonnades, as well as gatherings for the drawing up of tax agreements. Archives were stored in the inner parts of the building, while classes were held in the sanctuary and courtyard. Worshippers often used the sanctuary for the five daily prayers and for memorizing the Qur'ān. Great congregations gathered for the Friday prayers and feast days, or to seek refuge and comfort at times of distress. Thus the Muslim *jāmi'* served the purposes of the ancient Greek tem-

12. The original name was *Jāmi' al-Qāhirah* and the later one *al-Jāmi' al-Azhar*.

13. According to the Muslim calendar work was begun on the 24th of Jumādā al-Ūlā, 359, and completed in Ramadān, 361.

14. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part II, p. 180; Part IV, pp. 49-55.

15. *Jāmi'* comes from a verb that means to *assemble*. The term used for a modern university is another form of the same word, *jāmi'ah*. The word *mosque* is a corruption of the Arabic *masjid*, which comes from a verb that means to prostrate oneself in worship. Today the terms *jāmi'* and *masjid* are used without real distinction.

ples, stoas and schools. The mosques of 'Amr ibn-al-'Āṣ and ibn-Ṭūlūn in the older parts of the city were buildings of this sort. Jawhar followed the customary procedure when he built al-Azhar to serve as the official *jāmi'* of the new capital.

We are not sure why the building came to be called *al-Azhar*. The word implies "most shining." It is probable that when the descendants of al-Mu'izz built a number of new mosques in al-Qāhirah, the original name, *Mosque of Cairo*, was too indefinite to remain in use. At the same time the building was so brilliantly lighted on feast nights that a name like *Most Shining* was appropriate.

What is more important is the fact that the Fāṭimids gained special satisfaction from the name, because the Prophet's daughter from whom they were descended was nicknamed *al-Zahrā'*. The Fāṭimids called their palaces *al-Qusūr al-Zāhirah* and used another form of the name for their royal gardens. It was, therefore, natural for them to use *al-Azhar* for their mosque.

The original building¹⁶ was a rectangle about 280 feet long and 227 wide. The principal gateway was on the north-west side, giving access to a central courtyard, open to the sky. There were no columns along the wall through which this gateway passed, but on the far side of the courtyard there was the sanctuary, with columns four rows deep supporting the roof. It is probable but not certain that the colonnades or loggias on the right and left hand sides of the courtyard were erected as parts of the original building. A central aisle in the sanctuary led through the columns to the prayer niche,¹⁷ marking the direction of Makkah. To the right of this little apse were the pulpit¹⁸ stairs, which the preacher climbed to deliver his sermon. Undoubtedly the original pulpit was a large piece of furniture backed against the rear wall, with steps leading up from a decorated gateway and with a small dome over the top step, where the preacher delivered his sermon. The woodwork was probably decorated with Quranic verses and geometrical figures, either carved or inlaid with mother-of-pearl. In some of the North African mosques¹⁹ the pulpits were on wheels and kept in small rear rooms, from which they could be rolled out for use. As, however, the pulpit of the mosque at al-Mahdiyyah was stationary, it is reasonable to suppose that the first pulpit of

16. For a detailed description see Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, pp. 58, 59.

17. The prayer niche is *al-mihrāb*; the direction of Makkah, *al-qiblah*.

18. The pulpit was *al-minbar*.

19. *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 2, 1957.

al-Azhar was also fixed solidly in the sanctuary, rather than on wheels.

To start with there was no fountain for ablutions, as the Fāṭimids believed that a worshipper should attend to his ablutions before coming to the mosque. The first minaret was probably small and built of brick over the main entrance. There were also a number of doorways leading to the side streets, but in general the outer wall was a mass of sandstone, protecting the inner courtyard and beautiful loggias from the tumult of the bazaars.²⁰

The year after Jawhar completed the construction of al-Azhar, the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Mu'izz came to Egypt from North Africa. In 973 he reached Alexandria, where the officials welcomed him near the ancient Pharos. Five hundred camels brought his gold and treasures to his new capital. When the Caliph reached Cairo, Jawhar met him and kissed the earth at his feet. After spending three days by the river Nile, al-Mu'izz went to the great palace prepared for him, clad in green silk decorated with jewels. He presented himself to his subjects as a divinely chosen descendant of the Prophet and a religious leader, rather than as a political king.

Although the Fāṭimids were accused of being impious heretics, they were really religious according to their own system. They tried to suppress the commercialized prostitution, excess of polygamy, sodomy and lewd talk, which were threatening the Muslim communities. Even though the wine shops were in theory only used by Christians and Jews, they were closed before sunset.

During the Feast of Ramaḍān, or *'Īd al-Fiṭr*, of the year 973, the Caliph al-Mu'izz himself re-dedicated al-Azhar as the official assembly mosque of his new capital. He also conducted a service in the mosque on the first day of the Muslim month of *al-Muḥarram*, after which he rode back to his palace with his four sons, clad in coats of mail, mounted on Arab stallions and escorted by elephants. The banquet halls of the new palace were then thrown open to the people of al-Qāhirah, who ate their fill at the Caliph's table.

Al-Azhar was so beautifully illuminated for the feast nights, that the Caliph al-Mu'izz built the *Watch Tower of al-Azhar* on his palace wall. Unfortunately he did not enjoy it for more than

20. As at the Mosque of ibn-Tūlūn there may have been a *ziyādah*, or outer court with an extra wall around al-Azhar. Creswell (*Muslim Arch.*) Vol. II, p. 339.

a short time, as he died in 975, when he was only forty-nine years old. He was followed by his nineteen year old son al-'Azīz, who reigned until 996 A.D.

An Arab writer was able to say about this new Caliph that "Against these fleeting shadows (of the puppet 'Abbāsids) the splendid succession of the African Caliphs stands out in striking contrast." "The most brilliant of these Caliphs was al-'Azīz. Stalwart, of tawny complexion, with reddish hair and large blue eyes, a dauntless hunter, a connoisseur of horses and precious stones, he is the first example of that large hearted Saracenic chivalry, which made so deep and lasting an impression upon the West."²¹

From Morocco to the tributaries of the Euphrates and as far south as al-Yaman in Arabia, he was acknowledged as the legal successor of the Prophet. Although he had a Christian vizier and a Russian wife, whose brothers were the patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem, al-'Azīz did not neglect al-Azhar,²² which during his lifetime not only continued to serve as the assembly mosque of the new Fāṭimid capital, but also became a center of education and legal development.

A Ramaḍān Service

Following his father's example, al-'Azīz preached at al-Azhar during at least one of the Fridays of Ramaḍān. The Arab historians have recorded so many details about the Quranic readings and ceremonies used for these occasions, that it is possible to visualize what a Ramaḍān service was like.²³

Straw matting was laid on the floor and three cushions were placed in front of the prayer niche for the Caliph to kneel upon. In order to protect al-'Azīz from danger, the prayer niche was surrounded by rugs hung between the columns, a chain was stretched around the entrance and no one was permitted to enter the mosque before the Caliph himself arrived.

In the meantime troops were drawn up in the square between the great palace and the smaller one opposite to it. The city was in a festive mood, with the vivid colors of Oriental costumes and the flashing of weapons.

21. Taken from Yaḥyā ibn-Sa'īd and translated in the *Renaissance of Islam*, p. 12, by Bukhsh and Margioulouh from the German of Adam Mez. (Luzac, 1937).

22. The Arabic of vizier is *wazīr*. Al-'Azīz had the ceiling of part of the mosque raised a cubit, or forearm's length.

23. Maqrīzī (*Khitat*) Part II, pp. 322-329; Part IV, p. 61. Qalqashandī, Vol. III, pp. 509-511. Taghri-Birdī (*Nujūm*) Vol. IV, pp. 102, 103; Vol. V, pp. 176, 177.

At the appointed hour the Golden Gate of the palace swung open and the Caliph rode forth, accompanied by high officials and personal attendants. He was clad in a white silk robe, with a cloth²⁴ over his head and shoulders, a mace of office in his hand, a sword girt by his side and a jewelled umbrella held over his head. Qur'ān reciters went before him, chanting selected passages in a devout way, while he passed down the central avenue of the city, until he reached the approach to al-Azhar, with its high walls rising above the surrounding houses.

After the Caliph had entered the mosque and was seated inside the section of the sanctuary curtained off for his safety, the other worshippers were admitted to the building, while across the city there sounded the call to prayer, which was repeated inside the mosque.

Incense was then spread over the pulpit, which the Caliph mounted. One of his high officials fastened a curtain, so that the top of the pulpit where the Caliph preached his sermon looked like the palanquin on a camel. After the Chief Judge had called down the blessings of Allāh upon his royal master, the Caliph read a short discourse, full of religious exhortations and quotations from the Qur'ān.

When he finished his sermon the Caliph prayed, "O Allāh, bless Muḥammad the chosen, 'Alī the accepted, Fāṭimah the pure and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, grandsons of the Apostle; those whom Thou hast freed from stain and thoroughly purified. O Allāh, bless the pure Imāms, the ancestors of the Commander of the Faithful." Then after he had called out, "Be mindful of Allāh that He may be mindful of you," the Caliph descended from the pulpit and stood in front of the prayer niche, with his highest officials standing close at hand.

Between the columns of the sanctuary and in the open court high officials, soldiers and palace attendants were facing Makkah, waiting in a reverent way for the prayer service to begin. After the silence had been broken by the call, "Allāh is most great," either the Caliph himself or his vizier read some verses, which were woven on a shield to the right of the prayer niche. First there was the opening *sūrah* of the Qur'ān.

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to God the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most

24. *Ṭaylasūn*; see Dozy, p. 278.

Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship and Thine aid do we seek. Show us the straight way; the way of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy grace, Those whose portion is not wrath and who go not astray.²⁵

This was followed by a quotation from Sūrah LXII which begins:—

Whatever is in the heavens and on earth doth declare the praises and glory of God, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

The sūrah speaks of the Prophet and those who oppose him and ends with an appeal to place religion ahead of business:

“When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of God and leave off business.” “The blessing from the presence of God is better than any amusement or bargain.”

After these passages had been read, the Caliph performed the ritual and recited the well known verses of prayer, while several high officials and prayer leaders repeated his words for the congregation as a whole. Caliph ‘Azīz followed the custom of his father by making the litany much longer than usual.

Then the passages woven into a shield on the left hand side of the prayer niche were read. They were taken from Sūrah LXIII of the Qur’ān, which ends with the following exhortation:

“Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of God. If any act thus, the loss is their own. Spend something (for charity) out of the substance which we have bestowed on you, before death comes to any of you.” “To no soul will God grant respite when the appointed time comes, and God is well acquainted with what you do.”

After reading the verses from this passage, the Caliph performed the ritual of prayer a second time. Finally, while the members of the congregation were kneeling, he left the mosque to return to his palace. Then the streets of the city and the great square were full of gaiety, with the blowing of trumpets and the beating of drums.

25. The translations are based upon the A. Yūsuf ‘Alī edition of the Qur’ān (Hofner Co., 1946), but with numerous changes.

Thus al-Azhar was honored as the official assembly mosque of a vast realm stretching from Syria to the Atlantic. Ten centuries after its founding it is still the principal mosque of Egypt and one of the most famous places of worship in the world. The fame of al-Azhar, however, is not so much due to its importance as a shrine for devotion, as to its development as a center of higher learning.

The First Legal Courses

As has already been explained, the Fāṭimid Caliphate was one branch of the Ismā'īlī underground movement, designed to substitute lineal descendants of the Prophet for the established Caliphs of Baghdād. During the early years of their activity the Ismā'īlī rebels were not powerful enough to support armies, so that they developed a remarkable system of ideology and a hierarchy of propaganda agents for the winning of converts.

When the Fāṭimids conquered the Nile Valley, it is reasonable to believe that the majority of the inhabitants were Sunnites, using their orthodox codes of law and their traditional forms of worship. As the Fāṭimids did not dare to offend these Sunni subjects, they refrained from treating them in an oppressive way. Instead they tried to win them by means of their ideology and propaganda system.

One of the principal ways of promoting the Fāṭimids' prestige was by means of their legal system, which was permeated with their special ideology. When, therefore, the Caliph al-Mu'izz conquered Egypt, he desired to train jurists, able to persuade the people to substitute Fāṭimid law for their older Sunni codes. Accordingly, he sent a number of legal authorities from North Africa to the new capital at Cairo, so that they could introduce the Fāṭimid legal system. Among these jurists there were two men of unusual ability.

One of them was the judge abū-Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān ibn-Muḥammad, who was born in the tenth century and brought up at Qayrawān in what is today Tunisia. After studying both the Sunni and Shī'ite legal codes he became employed by the Fāṭimids, serving first as a provincial judge and later as the chief justice of al-Mu'izz. He went to the new city of al-Qāhirah to give advice about reorganizing the legal system in Egypt. He died shortly before al-Mu'izz himself passed away, leaving behind him

his son 'Alī, who took his place as the principal legal authority of the realm.

The other great jurist was ibn-Killis,²⁶ who has already been mentioned. He was a Baghdād Jew, who worked as a merchant at Damascus until 946, when for some reason he fled to Egypt. He became a rich man of affairs, employed by the authorities to help with government transactions. After he had secretly studied the Muslim laws and rites, he embraced Islām in 967, while attending prayers in the great mosque of Old Cairo. This led to his becoming a high official in the local government.²⁷ It was not until the crisis occurred in Egypt that ibn-Killis went to the court of al-Mu'izz and persuaded the Caliph to invade the Nile Valley. After the invasion took place, ibn-Killis was influential in reorganizing the internal affairs of Egypt, until he died about 990 or 991. As he brought with him from Baghdād a respect for learning, he became a great scholar and man of letters, composing books about Quranic reading, jurisprudence, ethics and hygiene. Scholars of all kinds came to him for instruction and he employed a staff of scribes to copy books about the subjects in which he was interested.

When al-Mu'izz died and al-'Azīz took his place, the young Caliph depended upon 'Alī ibn-al-Nu'mān for the development of his judicial system and gave an increasing amount of power to ibn-Killis, who finally became the vizier.

During the early years of the reign of al-'Azīz the Sunnites continued to carry on educational work in the ancient mosques²⁸ of the older parts of the city, while the heretical Fāṭimid studies were conducted in the palace. Before long, however, both the judge, 'Alī ibn-al-Nu'mān and the influential ibn-Killis took advantage of the new Mosque of al-Azhar for the promotion of Fāṭimid learning. The historian, al-Maqrīzī, gives an account of how these two authorities started higher education at al-Azhar.

During al-Sāfar of the year 365 (October 975) the judge, 'Alī ibn-al-Nu'mān, met at Jāmi' al-Qāhirah, known as al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, persons to whom he dictated his father's

26. Abū-al-Faraj Ya'qūb ibn-Yūsuf ibn-Killis.

27. Muḥammad al-Ikshīd was appointed by the 'Abbāsīd Caliph to reorganize the affairs in Egypt, where he ruled as an autonomous governor from 935 to 946. As his sons were too inexperienced to be successful rulers, the administration was turned over to an Ethiopian eunuch, Kāfūr, who left behind him a state of chaos when he died in 968. Ibn-Killis left Egypt when this unrest occurred.

28. The mosques of 'Amr ibn-al-'Aṣ and ibn-Ṭūlūn.

abstract of law, based upon the practices of the descendants of the Prophet. This abstract was entitled *The Abridgement*.²⁹ The attendance was a large one, the names of those present being noted.

Then when Ya'qūb ibn-Killis administered the vizierate for al-Azīz . . . the son of al-Mu'izz, he established places at his court for scholars who were men of letters, poets, legal authorities and theologians, assigning stipends for all of them. He composed books on jurisprudence and on Tuesdays held meetings, which were attended by scholars of the law, as well as by theologians and the students of polemics, who engaged in debates. He also held Friday meetings, at which he himself read his compositions to the people and which were attended by judges, scholars of jurisprudence, Qur'ān reciters, grammarians and authorities on the Traditions.

After speaking of a textbook³⁰ which ibn-Killis wrote, al-Maqrīzī goes on to say, "Al-'Azīz . . . fixed stipends for all of the legal authorities who attended the Vizier's classes, granting them such monthly payments as they needed. He also ordered to have living quarters built for them beside al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, where on Fridays they formed a circle after the morning prayer and until the afternoon one. They received annual stipends from the estate of the Vizier, their number being thirty-five. On the day of 'Īd al-Fiṭr al-'Azīz used to give them robes and also mules to ride on."³¹

With these words al-Maqrīzī describes the founding of higher education at al-Azhar. The living quarters were built during the year 988 A.D.

Al-Qalqashandī gives a somewhat different account when he quotes an early authority as saying that the "Vizier ibn-Killis asked al-'Azīz to provide maintenance for a group of scholars and to allow a sufficient living stipend for each one of them. He built them a court close to al-Jāmi' al-Azhar and on Friday they formed a circle, at the mosque after the prayer service, to discuss jurisprudence. Abū-al-Ya'qūb, judge of al-Khandaq, presided over the circle and the session until the time of afternoon prayer. There were thirty-seven persons."³² It is likely that this number included

29. The *Abridgement* (*al-Iqtisār*) was written by abū-Hanīfah al-Nu'mān as a digest of his great legal code *Da'ā'im al-Islām*. See bibliography under Nu'mān.

30. "The Vizier's Epistle on Shi'i Jurisprudence," *Al-Risālah al-Wazīriyah fi'l-Fiqh al-Shi'i*.

31. Maqrīzī (*Khitaṭ*) Part IV, pp. 156, 157.

32. Qalqashandī, Vol. III, p. 367.

the thirty-five scholars mentioned by al-Maqrīzī, and in addition the judge who presided and some authority who gave a lecture.

Two years later ibn-Killis persuaded the Caliph to make the classes "universal,"³³ which may refer to the admission of students other than the original group, or to the adopting of a complete program of studies to take the place of the original law course. It is not unlikely that it refers to both of these things.

The appointment of the scholars to study law and to live at al-Azhar was during the Muslim year 378. As the academic year 1958-1959 coincided with the Muslim year 1378, higher studies were instituted at al-Azhar in an organized way over a thousand lunar years ago.

Characteristics of the Fāṭimid Ideology

There seem to have been two principal reasons for organizing advanced study at al-Azhar. One reason was to teach the legal authorities how to introduce the Fāṭimid system of jurisprudence, to take the place of the Sunnite codes. The other reason was to train propaganda agents to win proselytes for the Fāṭimid cause. This special training was necessary, because in many ways the Fāṭimid system was different from the Sunnite one, which existed in Egypt before the Fāṭimid invasion took place.

When, for instance, the Sunnites wished to interpret an ambiguous passage in the Qur'ān, they made use of the sayings of the Prophet's Companions, as well as those originating with the Prophet himself and the members of his family. The Fāṭimids, on the other hand, refused to honor the sayings of the Companions, only regarding as authoritative the things said by Muḥammad and the members of his family.

There were, moreover, four characteristics of the Fāṭimid system which were so different from the Sunnite practices that it was necessary to train the leaders how to understand them.

In the first place, there was the doctrine of the *Imāmate*, which was similar to the theory of the divine right to rule, upheld by many ancient peoples. The most important concept of Fāṭimid jurisprudence was the divine right of the Imām, or Fāṭimid Caliph, to rule the theocracy of Islām, because of his descent from the Prophet's daughter, Fāṭimah. This aura of sanctity made it possible for him to demand obedience from his people to an

33. The Arabic word is *jāmi'ah*: Yūnus, p. 73. Khaffājī, Vol. I, p. 24.

extent that was not possible in most of the mediaeval countries. The great Fāṭimid Caliphs kept themselves aloof, only appearing to their subjects on special occasions in a dramatic way.

In the second place, because the Fāṭimids were the descendants and heirs of the Prophet, they assumed that they had a right to the same fifth part of the gains, which the Prophet enjoyed during his lifetime. In Sūrah VIII, verse 41 of the Qur'ān it is revealed, "Know that if you have acquired something, a fifth of it is for Allāh and the Apostle, and the near of kin, the orphans, the needy and the wayfarer." Although the Arabic word used in this verse for "acquire" usually refers to what is seized as booty, the Fāṭimids interpreted the word in such a general way, that their fifth share resembled a 20 percent income tax. Needless to say it was important to train propaganda agents how to present this matter, so that the common people would feel that it was a religious duty for them to make generous contributions to their Caliph.

A third characteristic of the Fāṭimid system was the doctrine of the infallibility of the Caliph. The descendants of Muḥammad taught that he received two forms of knowledge.³⁴ One of them was the revelation, which was given out publicly in the form of the Qur'ān. The other form was a special type of understanding imparted for the Prophet to use in a personal way, rather than to proclaim to his followers. When the Prophet died he made his son-in-law 'Alī heir to this special learning and 'Alī in turn passed it on to the *imāms*, who were lineal descendants of his wife, Fāṭimah, and himself. Thus the Fāṭimid Caliph of each generation was the possessor of this precious gift of learning, which made him so infallible in interpreting the Qur'ān and the law, that he served as a supreme court for his realm. As, however, it was necessary for the Caliph to train jurists, so that they would carry out his infallible decisions, the legal courses at al-Azhar were important.

Finally, because of the possession of this super-knowledge or gnosticism the Fāṭimids, following the example of their ancestors, felt free to indulge in studies other than those based on the Qur'ān. They were careful not to confuse the ignorant people with these studies, but they themselves gathered at their court a brilliant group of scholars.³⁵ Although they were interested in

34. Revealed knowledge was called *al-zāhir* and the special knowledge *al-bāṭin*.

35. See series of articles on these matters, *Muslim World*, 1960; January, pp. 30-38; April, pp. 130-141.

all of the Greek sciences, they were especially attracted to philosophy and metaphysics. They were unable, however, to devote themselves to pure science in an objective way but used their knowledge of numbers and metaphysics to prove the divine right of the Caliph to rule.

In order to explain these principles and to win what today we think of as "party members" for their government, the Fāṭimids developed an important system of proselyting and indoctrination. Records left by the scholar Aḥmad Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī make it reasonable to suppose that the Fāṭimids maintained a staff of over nine thousand agents to propagate their ideology.³⁶ Each agent was called a *dā'ī*, and there were different ranks of these agents, similar to the ranks of prelates and priests in the Christian church. There were also rites not unlike confirmation and ordination. Each member of the hierarchy had to be thoroughly trained. An agent of low rank was expected to live among the common people, whose psychology and practices it was necessary for him to understand. It was his task to teach the traditional beliefs of revealed Islām, but at the same time to raise questions, which made the people anxious for further instruction.

The agents of higher rank administered oaths of loyalty and introduced their proselytes to some of the special learning of the Fāṭimid system. By allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān and traditions, they supported the claim of their Caliph to rule by divine right. Agents of the highest ranks were obliged to be thoroughly educated, so that they could supervise their assistants and take part in debates with the leaders of hostile sects.

It seems to be certain that the Fāṭimids used al-Azhar for some of the training of these dogmatists and propaganda agents, although a large part of the instruction may have been given in the palace and, after it was founded, at Dār al-Ḥikmah.

The First Textbooks

Undoubtedly the Qur'ān was the first book to be taught at al-Azhar, as groups of the faithful must have met at the mosque to hear the revelations explained. Then in 975, as has already been mentioned, 'Alī ibn-al-Nu'mān dictated to a group at al-

36. See Ḥusayn (*Adab Miṣr*) pp. 19-22. A member of the faculty of Cairo University has the copy of a manuscript written by Ja'far ibn-Manṣūr al-Yaman, which says that the system was derived from the Christian church. See *Muslim World*, April, 1960, pp. 130-141.

Azhar the abridgement of his father's great code of Fāṭimid law.³⁷ The original code, *Da'ā'im al-Islām*, contains lengthy discussions filling two modern volumes. The abridgement, *Kitāb al-Iqtisār*, is contained in one small volume with brief summaries of the dissertations in the longer book.

Both works are divided into two parts, the first one dealing with the seven Fāṭimid Pillars of Faith and the second part with matters of a secular nature. The following table gives a comparison between the seven Fāṭimid Pillars and the five Sunnite ones.

<i>Fāṭimid</i>	<i>Sunnite</i>	<i>Arabic term</i>
Faith	Confession of faith	<i>al-Imān</i>
Ritual purification		<i>al-Ṭahārah</i>
Prayer	Prayer	<i>al-Ṣalāh</i>
Poor tax	Poor tax	<i>al-Zakāh</i>
Fast	Fast	<i>al-Ṣawm</i>
Pilgrimage	Pilgrimage	<i>al-Ḥajj</i>
Holy war		<i>al-Jihād</i>

The most important section is the first one about faith. The Sunnites consider that faith involves belief in the creed, "There is no Deity but Allāh and Muḥammad is the Apostle of Allāh." Taking it for granted that every Muslim subscribed to this creed, the Fāṭimids regarded faith as acknowledgment that their Caliph was the legal head of the theocracy of Islām. This interpretation of faith, as well as ordinances for honoring the other Pillars, are given in great detail.

The second part of the book deals with the same secular subjects which form the material of the standard codes of Muslim jurisprudence. Some of the more important of these topics are connected with trade and financial transactions, slaves, inheritance, marriage, divorce, hunting, drinks, medicine, clothing, oaths and vows, treatment of conquered peoples and judgments. Only traditions originating with members of the Prophet's family are used to explain these subjects.

The next textbook to be taught at al-Azhar was probably "The Vizier's Epistle on Shī'ite Jurisprudence,"³⁸ which ibn-Killis wrote and started to use as a basis for his lectures during

37. See bibliography, Nu'mān, *Da'ā'im al-Islām* and *Kitāb al-Iqtisār*. See also *Muslim World*, January 1960, pp. 30-38.

38. *Al-Risālah al-Wazīriyah fī 'l-Fiqh al-Shī'i*.

Ramaḍān, 980 A.D. It is evident that this book contained material similar to that in *Da'ā'im al-Islām*.

During the following generation a grandson of the jurist al-Nu'mān taught a book entitled "Differences in the Fundamentals of the Sects."³⁹ This text was probably used to teach legal authorities and propaganda agents how to understand the differences between the Fāṭimid system and the codes of the people, whom the Fāṭimids wished to win to their cause.

The names of other textbooks are not mentioned by the historians, but it is reasonable to suppose that famous classic works were used to teach subjects like grammar and rhetoric, while other books were composed by the Fāṭimid scholars themselves in connection with subjects like exegesis of the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet. A large number of books were produced during the Fāṭimid period, but there are no accurate records as to which ones were taught at al-Azhar.

Courses of Study

There must have been three kinds of classes which met at the mosque. In the first place, there were the groups of pious people, who came to al-Azhar to hear the Qur'ān read and explained. In the second place, there were circles of students sitting on the floor, while their teachers on low chairs dictated to them and answered their questions. In the third place, there were formal lectures, which were often delivered by the chief of the propaganda hierarchy himself.

These lectures, which were called "Sessions of Wisdom,"⁴⁰ were held on Mondays for the public and on Thursdays for a selected group. Most of them were held in a court⁴¹ of the palace, but at least some of the sessions for women were held at al-Azhar, and probably others were held there for men as well.

The language of the lectures was poetic and well suited to educated audiences. As the discourses were brief, they were evidently followed by periods of informal discussion. Although the material was chiefly composed of moral exhortations connected with the Quranic ordinances, the use of allegorical interpretation made it possible to introduce some of the Fāṭimid ideology about

39. *Ikhtilāf Uṣūl al-Madhāhib* by 'Abd-al-'Azīz ibn-Muḥammad al-Nu'mān.

40. *Majālis al-Ḥikmah*. See bibliography: Ḥusayn, *al-Majālis al-Mustanṣiriyyah* and Mājid, *al-Sijjalāt*.

41. The court was *al-Muḥḥawil*; the chief of the hierarchy, *Dā'ī al-Du'āh*.

the divine right of the Caliph into every lecture. At the end of the session the persons present kissed the hand of the lecturer and the seal of the Caliph, which was attached to his text.

Unfortunately there are no reliable records about the subjects taught at al-Azhar during Fāṭimid times. One ancient book entitled *Kitāb al-Falak al-Dawwār*,⁴² page 165, says that

The persons responsible for the Da'wah (Fāṭimid movement) used to learn the sciences of grammar, philosophy, logic, astronomy and the fundamentals of jurisprudence at al-Azhar. Then when their interest in science waxed keen, they moved to Dār al-Ḥikmah, where they were taught the basic principles of the established dogmas, which were the important matters of the movement. This group at Dār al-Ḥikmah was called 'The Table of the Right Way'⁴³ or more appropriately 'The Dome of Guidance'.

This quotation makes it clear that subjects like philosophy and astronomy were taught at al-Azhar, in addition to the Quranic studies.

The famous Persian traveller,⁴⁴ Nāṣir-i-Khusraw, has given a detailed account of his education. As he spent a number of years in Egypt during the middle of the eleventh century and became a *dā'i*, his account throws a great deal of light on what education was like during the Fāṭimid period.

After memorizing the Qur'ān before he was ten years old, Nāṣir-i-Khusraw spent nine years studying the Arabic language, grammar, prosody, poetry, etymology and methods of calculation. In the meantime, when he was fourteen, he started to study astronomy, astrology, divination by sand, the geometry of Euclid and the classic work of Ptolemy.

Between the ages of fourteen and seventeen he also studied jurisprudence, the traditions of the Prophet, Quranic commentaries, intonation of the Qur'ān, history and literary composition. At the age of thirty-two he learned the languages of the Penta-teuch, the Psalms and the Gospels, after which he spent six years in studying these Scriptures.

Nāṣir-i-Khusraw then studied a Persian work⁴⁵ on natural and divine knowledge and the great medical text of Avicenna.⁴⁶ After

42. Husayn (*Diwān al-Mu'ayyad*) p. 57, note 2.

43. *Mā'idah al-Rushd* or *Qabbah al-Hudā*.

44. Khusraw, Intr. pp. viii-xi.

45. *Apophthegms of Jamasp*.

46. *Al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* of ibn-Sinā.

that he took up transcendent mathematics, commercial and political economy and the magic square.⁴⁷ Finally, at the age of forty-four, he entered upon six additional years of study devoted to the Cabala,⁴⁸ magic, sorcery and the teachings of Jesus.⁴⁹

It is not likely that Hebrew and Greek, with studies in the Old and New Testaments, were taught at al-Azhar. Different forms of magic were undoubtedly not dealt with in the Mosque, as the Fātimid conception of esoteric learning did not include the occult sciences. Medicine was probably taught at one of the hospitals in Cairo instead of at al-Azhar, while commerce and advanced mathematics almost certainly had to be acquired from private teachers. On the other hand, it is reasonable to believe that the linguistic, literary, legal and Quranic studies mentioned by Nāṣir-i-Khusraw were taught at al-Azhar, as well as logic and a certain amount of mathematics and astronomy.

al-Ḥākim

The Caliph al-ʿAzīz was followed by his son al-Ḥākim, who ruled from 996 to 1021 A.D. and was one of the most interesting characters in history. According to ibn-Aybak⁵⁰ he was still a boy when he preached his first Friday sermon, probably at al-Azhar during Ramaḍān.

During the years 1000 to 1005 the young Caliph conducted his business and went about the city at night. The result was that too many people lit their shops with bright lights and gave themselves up to wanton pleasure. We do not know how much the authorities at al-Azhar had to do with it, but before long al-Ḥākim gave up his night life and became interested in religion. In 1010 he renovated the building of al-Azhar, providing among other things a carved door, still preserved in the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo.

Although it was al-ʿAzīz who started the construction of a new mosque, it was al-Ḥākim who completed the work in 1013. The new building came to be familiarly known as *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ḥākimī*, or the Mosque of al-Ḥākim. It was north of the palace and, until al-Ḥākim's grandson rebuilt the fortifications at the north end of the city, it was outside of the city walls.

47. Zwemer, pp. 202-207. Khaldūn (Rosenthal) Vol. III, p. 177.

48. *Enc. Brit.* 11th Ed. Vol. XV, p. 620; XXII, pp. 698, 699.

49. He studied a book of Qustā ibn-Lūqā about Jesus' words of salvation. This book is not mentioned in *al-Fihrist* with the works of ibn-Lūqā.

50. Aybak, p. 165.

Although a Muslim is expected to pray five times a day, the official community service takes place at mid-day on Friday. At that service there is the sermon, or *khutbah*, and formerly there was an invocation for Allāh to bless the Caliph. Before the new mosque was erected, the official Friday service for the capital city of al-Qāhirah was held at al-Azhar.

When, however, the Mosque of al-Ḥākim was completed, a change occurred. Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn-abī-al-Faḍā'il quoted an early historian as saying,

I saw in the biography of al-Ḥākim that on Friday the ninth of Ramaḍān during the year three hundred and ninety-nine (1008 or 1009 A.D.), the Friday prayer was established at the Mosque of al-Ḥākim, which was new and outside the Bāb al-Ṭābiyah near Bāb al-Futūḥ. The Caliph used to preach there one Friday, in the Mosque of al-Azhar one Friday, in the Mosque of ibn-Ṭūlūn one Friday, and in the Mosque of Miṣr one Friday. The Friday sermon at al-Azhar was stopped.⁵¹

Al-Suyūṭī gives an account similar to the one just quoted, adding that "Al-Jami' al-Azhar was without the *khutbah* until the time of al-Zāhir Baybars."⁵² Al-Maqrīzī records an almost identical statement while another Arab historian named ibn-Aybak says that the Caliph al-Ḥākim preached in his new mosque himself, "Which was the first sermon to be preached there, and he ordered the Friday service at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar to be discontinued, so that from that very day it was inactive."⁵³

It seems reasonable to suppose that when the new Mosque of al-Ḥākim was built, the Caliph tried to popularize it by asking the people in the new quarter of al-Qāhirah to worship there on Fridays. At the same time he did not interfere with the services in the great assembly mosques of ibn-Ṭūlūn and 'Amr ibn-al-ʿĀṣ, which were located in the old parts of the city, far removed from the new Fāṭimid capital. The Friday service, however, must have been revived at al-Azhar before the Fāṭimid Caliphate came to an end, as it is recorded by reliable authorities that it was being held there when the régime collapsed.⁵⁴

51. *Patrologia*, Tome XII, pp. 501, 502. It is a question as to whether the date in this quotation is correct.

52. Suyūṭī, Part II, p. 155; Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 53.

53. Aybak, p. 173.

54. See next chapter.

As the fame of al-Azhar increased, high officials vied with one another in improving the living quarters for the students, beautifying the building, enlarging the collection of manuscripts and strengthening the courses.

The history⁵⁵ of al-Maqrīzī records that al-Ḥākim used some of the teachers of al-Azhar to start classes in his new mosque, but at the same time he made repairs and established endowments for al-Azhar, as well as for a number of other institutions. These endowments, *awqāf*, were in the form of buildings and shops in Old Cairo and other quarters of the city. As the investments were in perpetuity, the properties could not be sold or transferred and the buildings on them could not be torn down.

The income which al-Azhar realized annually from these endowments was appropriated in accordance with the following budget:⁵⁶

The preacher	84.00 dīnārs.
Yearly supply of matting	108.00
Three camel loads of chickens and their young	12.75
Incense from India, camphor, musk, etc. ...	15.00
Half camel load of candle wax	7.00
Cleaning the mosque and sewing the matting	5.00
Preparing lamp wicks	1.00
Charcoal for incense burning	0.50
Salt for the lamps	0.25
Provisions chains, light holders and roofing.	24.00
Palm fibre, four ropes and six buckets	0.50
Cloth for cleaning the lamps	0.50
10 cutting tools, 10 rattles hemp rope, 200 brooms	1.25
Pottery jars and wages for bearing water ...	3.00
1200 rattles of oil for lamps and wages for delivery	37.50
Salaries of three prayer leaders and four as- sistants, and for fifteen prayer callers ⁵⁷ ...	556.50
Supervision	24.00
Brushing and cleaning cisterns	1.00

55. Maqrīzī (*Khitat*) Part IV, p. 55.

56. *Ibid*; Part IV, pp. 49-52, Part II, p. 275. See also Rajab, pp. 71-73. The *dīnār* was a gold coin. The description of the matting is not altogether clear and there seems to be a misprint in connection with the word for chickens. The Arabic for a camel load is *qintār*.

57. A prayer leader received 2½ gold coins a month; a prayer caller and an assistant received 2 gold coins apiece.

Repair of pavements, walls and roof	60.00
180 loads of chopped straw to feed a yoke of oxen to work the water pump	8.85
Storage of fodder	4.00
Land to provide fodder for the oxen	7.00
Expenses connected with the bucket pump . .	15.50
Care of the lavatory	11.00

Such was the budget for the upkeep of the mosque as a religious institution. There must have been supplementary grants for the educational work. During the Fātimid period there was a Supervisor, *al-Mushrif*, who had four assistants. There do not seem to be any items in the budget for the salaries of these administrative officers or the teachers, who were probably supported by special funds.

In addition to the financial contributions, there were also gifts of valuable objects. Al-Ḥākim, for instance, gave two large lanterns, *tannūrān*, and twenty-seven smaller ones, which were probably made of solid silver, to be hung during Ramaḍān but stored at other times. He also placed a costly silver band half way up the prayer niche, so as to beautify it.

One of the most amusing gifts to al-Azhar was the famous talisman, which al-Maqrīzī describes in the following way:

It is said that in this mosque there was a talisman to prevent the birds from perching and breeding there. It was effective for doves, pigeons and other birds. It consisted of the images of three birds, each one formed at the top of a column. Two images were in the front part of the mosque, in the fifth space between the columns, or fifth *riwāq*. One of these was on a column on the west side, another was on one of the two columns to the left of the entrance to the prayer caller's vestibule. The third image was in the open court on a column, on the north-east side.⁵⁸

While al-Azhar was flourishing because of al-Ḥākim's interest in religion, the Caliph himself proceeded to act in a most erratic way. During the course of his reign he forbade the sale of certain vegetables and other things, associated with the names of persons hostile to the Prophet's family. Not only were wine vessels broken, the wine being poured out, but raisins and honey were also prohibited to prevent their being used to make liquor. At one

58. Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 49.

The central courtyard
with the colleges of
Taybars and Āqbughā
on the left.



East side of the central courtyard.





The central courtyard during the 19th century.

Instruction for a blind pupil.

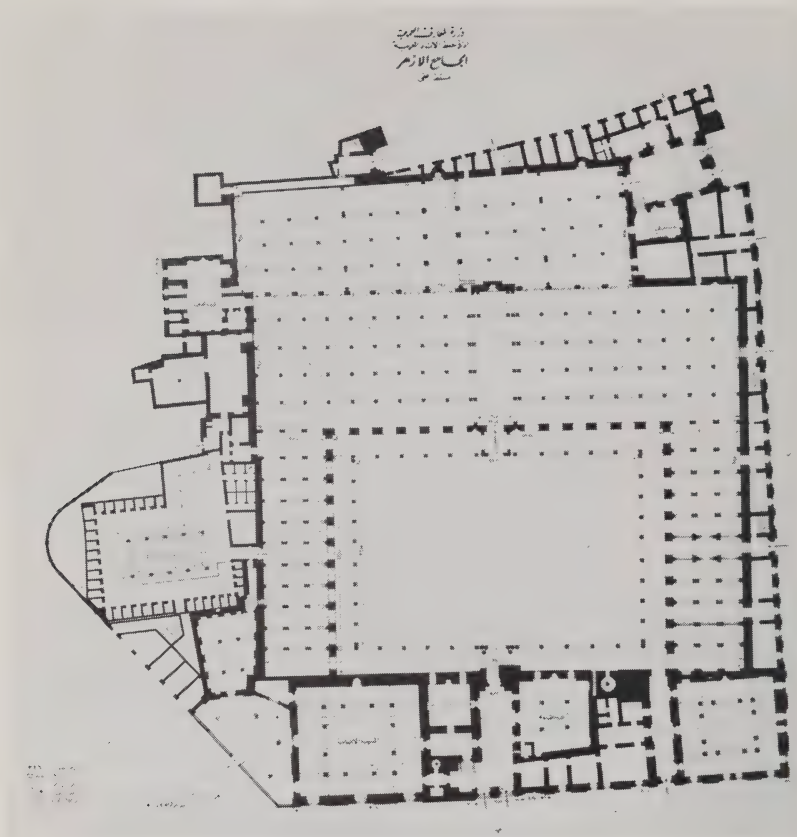




West side of the central courtyard and the minarets of al-Ghawri, Qā'it-Bāy and Āqbughā.



Special classes being held in the sanctuary.



Plan of the Mosque building.

Bottom: Colleges of Āqbughā and Taybars and al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī.

Center: Courtyard with the common lavatory to the left and loggias on both sides.

Rear: Old sanctuary with the newer one of Katkhudā behind, his tomb on the right and the Jawhariyah to the left.

time citizens were not permitted to ride animals in al-Qāhirah or to go on foot past the royal palace, while dogs were either driven out or killed.

After being greatly honored, some Christian officials were beheaded or tortured. Before long the Christians were obliged to wear dark colored turbans, women's sashes and two foot wooden crosses hung around their necks. At the same time the Jews were ordered to wear yellow turbans and to suspend heavy wooden blocks from their shoulders. Neither Christians nor Jews were allowed to ride horses or to use fancy saddles for their donkeys. During the year 1009 an order was given to close many churches, which subsequently were torn down. When the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem was destroyed, it greatly aroused Christendom. The Caliph also turned against his astrologers, expelling them from his court.

During the last six years of his reign al-Ḥākim prevented women from leaving their homes. Their baths were closed and shoemakers were forbidden to make slippers for them.

During the year 1017 a Persian named al-Darazī began to influence the Caliph in an extraordinary way. He was assisted by a disciple named Ḥamzah, who persuaded al-Ḥākim to abandon the institutions of traditional religion, in order to become the central figure of a new cult. An Arab author has described these events in the following way:

Al-Darazī was of Persian origin and his name was Muḥammad ibn-Ismā'il. He came to Egypt during the year 408 (1017 A.D.), entering the service of al-Ḥākim bi-Amr-Allāh. He was the first person who revealed the divine inspiration of that Caliph. But the man who first spoke openly about this doctrine was Ḥamzah ibn-'Alī al-Zuzānī al-Labbād. Al-Darazī wove this doctrine into a new creed, fashioning its warp and woof from esoteric principles. He composed a treatise about it, which he read at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar in al-Qāhirah. It stirred up a tumult among the people and on account of it al-Darazī was obliged to leave Egypt, seeking shelter in Mount Lebanon.⁵⁹

It was in connection with this incident that Aḥmad Ḥamīd-al-Dīn al-Kirmānī wrote his epistle,⁶⁰ which was probably read at al-Azhar, as it was copied and preserved by a prayer caller of

59. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, p. 902 footnote. See also Aybak, p. 162.

60. See bibliography, Kirmānī (*al-Risālah al-Wā'izah*).

the mosque. Al-Kirmānī was one of the leading scholars of his time, who made his reputation in Irān and 'Irāq before he came to Egypt. His epistle was a brave refutation of the Caliph's claim to be divine.

Finally, in 1021 al-Ḥākim was assassinated, the members of his new cult being driven out of Egypt to form the community of Druze, which still exists in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

The brilliant but erratic Caliph al-Ḥākim was famous for one thing which brought great prestige to Cairo. Realizing that the part of the palace called *Dār al-'Ilm* was too confined to serve as a center for advanced study, he established in 1005 a new *Dār al-'Ilm*, adjoining the small palace at the north end of the city. This institution, which was called *Dār al-Ḥikmah*,⁶¹ served al-Qāhirah of the Fāṭimids as the Museum served Alexandria of the Ptolemies.

The director was the head of the propaganda hierarchy, who had a special staff of assistants to help him. Although the institution was important for the training of the Fāṭimid agents, it was open to research scholars who came for original study. Thus it rivalled the famous *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* at Baghdād and the centers of higher learning in Spain. All of the rooms were beautifully decorated, some of them being devoted to women. The scholars were not expected to pay dues, but instead were provided with paper, ink and pens. The institute was divided into sections for linguistic, legal, religious, mathematical and medical studies. Revenues from the royal estates supported teachers for all of these subjects, as well as for the astronomy and metaphysics, which were of special interest for the Fāṭimids. Thus students were able to attend lectures and classes, at the same time that they were using the library. This library was of great importance, as the Caliph filled it with books from the palace, procured additional volumes from his wealthy subjects and had many other manuscripts purchased or copied with the funds which he provided.

We do not know exactly what the relationship was between this new institution and al-Azhar. Although there was the great library at *Dār al-Ḥikmah*, important collections of books were also given to the older institution. It is probable that al-Azhar was more tolerant than *Dār al-Ḥikmah*. In 933, for instance, when some Fāṭimid scholars tried to drive from al-Azhar a scholar from

61. Court of Wisdom. *Dār al-'Ilm* means Court of Science.

another sect, academic freedom was upheld.⁶² Some time later, on the other hand, Dār al-Ḥikmah was closed because an orthodox Sunni tried to introduce the conservative doctrines of al-Ash'arī, which were at variance with the Fāṭimid ideology.⁶³ In general it is probable that students interested in legal, linguistic and religious studies worked at al-Azhar, while those seeking to understand the science, philosophy and esoteric features of the Fāṭimid system tended to study at Dār al-Ḥikmah.

The Successors of al-Ḥākim

When al-Ḥākim was assassinated in 1021 A.D., his immature son became the nominal Caliph for fourteen years, which were darkened by famine and lawlessness. The next Caliph was al-Mustaṣṣir, who was a grandson of al-Ḥākim and the son of a black concubine. He ruled from 1035 to 1094, the longest reign in Muslim history.

Before the Aswān Dam was built, the failure of rains in Ethiopia and Central Africa caused a collapse of the Egyptian irrigation system and a state of famine in the Nile Valley. One of the worst droughts in the history of Egypt took place at the time when William the Conqueror was invading England.

The people became so hungry that starving mobs and unruly soldiers stormed the public buildings and robbed the great libraries of many of their books. Abū-Bakr ibn-Aybak wrote that "Every day there died, according to the Bureau of Inheritance, about ten thousand persons in addition to unknown numbers of slaves." He also told of the profiteer prices and how the dogs used to enter the houses to eat the children, while birds dropped dead from hunger. Then he recorded that "With regard to al-Mustaṣṣir, his authority diminished, his rule weakened and his government became demoralized, so that he left the palace and went to al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, where he settled in the loggia to the right of the entrance by the upper gateway, remaining there until Badr al-Jamālī . . . known as the Amīr of the Armies came to him."⁶⁴

This Badr al-Jamālī was an Armenian officer serving as governor of Tyre, who set sail with a force of men to rescue the Caliph. During the years 1074 and 1075 he restored order in

62. Husayn (*Adab Miṣr*) p. 25.

63. About 1122 A.D. See Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Vol. II, p. 335.

64. Aybak, pp. 215, 231.

Egypt and also used his foreign labor to build the magnificent gateways at the north and south ends of al-Qāhirah, known as Bāb al-Futūḥ and Bāb Zuwaylah. It was probably about this same time that al-Azhar was repaired.

Badr al-Jamālī died in 1093, leaving his position as the power behind the throne to his son, al-Malik al-Afdal. The Caliph himself died the following year and, although his reign had been a long one, it formed a prelude to the collapse of the Fāṭimid Dynasty.

The next reign lasted for only five years, during which time the Caliph al-Musta'li was a puppet in the hands of his general. It was during this period, however, that an event took place which was destined to influence al-Azhar, Egypt and the entire Near East. In 1095, Pope Urban II, seated on a throne in an open field, made a passionate appeal to the ecclesiastics and laymen at the Council of Clermont. The appeal was to regain Jerusalem for Christendom. With cries of "*Deus le volt*" the persons present called out their response. It was the call which started the First Crusade. Four years later the Holy City was stormed by twelve hundred knights and twelve thousand soldiers of the Cross.

It was also during the reign of al-Musta'li that the Fāṭimid Dynasty became divided. A minority group championed his brother Nizār as the true Caliph, so that even in the modern world there are two sects of Ismā'ilīs, descended from the Fāṭimids.⁶⁵

Numerous records make it clear that al-Azhar was still a very important mosque during this period. About 1095 a special ceremony was instituted in connection with the great Shī'ite feast honoring the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn. The leading judge and other officers of the realm attended a memorial service at al-Azhar, before going across the square to the shrine of the Prophet's grandson al-Ḥusayn. On another occasion an important government proclamation about finances was read to the public in the mosque.⁶⁶

It was during the reign of a weak Caliph named al-Āmir, who succeeded al-Musta'li in 1101 and ruled until 1130, that the

65. Descendants of the branch who accepted al-Musta'li are the Bohra sect of India. Those who followed Nizār were responsible for the famous Assassins of Persia and Syria. Their principal sect in the modern world is that of the Khojas, presided over by the Āghā Khān.

66. Taghrī-Birdī (*Nujūm*) Vol. V, p. 153. Maqrīzī (*Mawā'iz*) Part I, ch. xxxi, sect. 10.

funeral service of the chief of the propaganda hierarchy was held at al-Azhar. It was during his reign too, that Dār al-Ḥikmah was temporarily closed, leaving al-Azhar as the leading educational institution of the realm. It was also at this time that a beautiful prayer niche made of carved woodwork was placed against the rear wall of the mosque. This fine specimen of craftsmanship is still preserved in the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo.

Although the next Caliph, al-Ḥāfiz, started as a weakling, before the end of his reign he took the reins of government into his own hands. It was this Caliph who built a new porch at al-Azhar, as the following words of al-Maqrīzī relate:

Al-Ḥāfiz li-Dīn-Allāh built in it (al-Azhar) a beautiful *maqṣūrah*, which was near the west doorway at the entrance to the mosque (sanctuary). It was inside the colonnades and known as *Maqṣūrat Fāṭimah*, in honor of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' who appeared in a vision, may Allāh the Almighty be well pleased with her.⁶⁷

This *maqṣūrah* was a handsome porch, placed on the far side of the open court in front of the inner sanctuary. It included a row of columns, a dome and decorative motifs. Part of the original porch can still be seen today, in spite of many alterations made since the time of al-Ḥāfiz.

The Fāṭimids encouraged a spirit of dramatic show, pleasure seeking and an appreciation of beautiful things. On feast days the people went to the gardens and pleasure resorts by the river to enjoy poetry, singing and amusement. The Caliphs celebrated the Shī'ite feasts and also the Epiphany, Christmas and Thursday of the Covenant. The Caliph himself sometimes presided over meals served on the great table in the Hall of Gold in the palace. During the nights of *al-Waqūd*, at the beginning and middle of the Muslim months of Rajab and Sha'bān, al-Azhar was brightly lighted and the mosque preacher joined several of his colleagues in addressing the throngs of people, who paid their respects to the Caliph. This atmosphere of pomp and festivity added to the importance of al-Azhar, which was a favorite center for ceremonies and celebrations.

It was the decree of Allāh that this Fāṭimid era, which was so brilliant and yet so heterodox, should not endure. The hand-

67. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 52. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, map—p. 58 and pp. 254, 256.

writing was already on the wall; the infallible Imāmate had become a vain show.

The Caliph al-Ḥāfiz, who built the new porch at al-Azhar, was followed by an infant son and an immature grandson, whose reigns were marked by violence and decline. Finally the last of the Fāṭimid Caliphs started to rule in 1160, with the title of al-ʿĀḍid. When his vizier was murdered an ambitious politician named Shawar indulged in a scandalous type of duplicity, trying simultaneously to gain the support of the Crusader general and the chief of the Saracens.⁶⁸

After numerous conflicts, during which a large part of the old section of Cairo was burned, a Saracen officer named Shīrkūh tried to restore order. He was accompanied by his young nephew, Saladin,⁶⁹ who murdered the villainous Shawar, so that his uncle could become the vizier. However, just as order was being restored during the year 1169, the uncle died unexpectedly.

When Saladin was appointed to become his uncle's successor, he found himself in an embarrassing position. Not only was he very young for such an important position, but he was also obliged to serve two masters. He was simultaneously vizier of the last of the Fāṭimid Caliphs and a representative of the ʿAbbāsids, responsible for defending Egypt from Crusader attack.

Finally when al-ʿĀḍid died no successor was appointed to take his place. The form of the call to prayer was changed from the Fāṭimid wording to that of the Sunnites, while the name of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliph of Baghdād was honored at the Friday services, in the place of the Fāṭimid ruler. Thus both from the minaret and the pulpit it was made known at al-Azhar and the other mosques that the heterodox Fāṭimid system had been supplanted by an orthodox Sunni régime.

When the powerful dynasty which had built al-Azhar collapsed, it was a staggering blow for the great mosque. Because it had served for generations as a center of Fāṭimid ideology, when the Fāṭimids were overthrown it was suspected of being a base of subversive propaganda. Thus there began a new chapter in the history of al-Azhar, stripped of its former splendor.

68. The Crusader was Amalric and the Saracen Nūr-al-Dīn.

69. Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn-Ayyūb.

The Ayyūbī Dynasty Founded by Saladin

1171-1193	Saladin (Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn)
1193-1198	al-‘Azīz, ‘Imād-al-Dīn
1198-1199	al-Manṣūr, Muḥammad
1199-1218	al-‘Ādil, Sayf-al-Dīn
1218-1238	al-Kāmil, Muḥammad
1238-1240	al-‘Ādil II
1240-1249	al-Ṣāliḥ, Najm-al-Dīn Ayyūb St. Louis attacked Damietta
1249-1250	Shajar-al-Durr
1250	Tūrān-Shāh
1250-1252	al-Ashraf Mūsā, still a child.

Saladin and the Ayyūbī Dynasty

Saladin

THE YEAR 1171 was the beginning of a new era in the Southern Near East. The young Saladin extended his influence so rapidly that four years later the 'Abbāsīd Caliph confirmed his rule over Egypt, Nubia and North Africa, in addition to Western Arabia, Palestine and Central Syria. His reign coincided with the romantic period of the Crusades, when feudalism was at its height and chivalry flourished. In Egypt it was a time when many new colleges were built, to substitute Sunnite education for the heretical system of the Fāṭimids.

Saladin established the Shāfi'ī code of law, which forbids the holding of the Friday service in more than one mosque in any particular city. The effect of this action on the mosques of al-Qāhirah in general and al-Azhar in particular is described by al-Maqrīzī in the following way:

When the Sultān Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn-Ayyūb was established in power, he assigned the position of Chief Judge to the Qāḍī Ṣadr-al-Dīn 'Abd-al-Malik ibn-Darabās, who instituted the legal system of his code of jurisprudence, which prevented the holding of the *khutbah* for the Friday service in two places in the same city, for it was the sect of the Imām al-Shāfi'ī. He therefore stopped the *khutbah* at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, holding it at the Mosque of al-Hākim, because it was more spacious. The Mosque of al-Azhar, accordingly, remained deprived of the Friday service for a hundred years, from the time when Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn-Ayyūb gained the power, to the time when the *khutbah* was revived during the days of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars.¹

When he first became the ruler of Egypt, Saladin was so desperately in need of money for his army and the refugees rendered homeless by his wars, that he sold many of the silver ornaments

1. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 53. Compare Suyūṭī, Part II, p. 155.

which he found in the mosques. One of these ornaments was the costly silver band which al-Ḥākim had placed in the prayer niche of al-Azhar.

We do not have detailed information about the fortunes of al-Azhar during the time of Saladin and his successors. The dynasty lasted for about eighty years, which were exciting ones for Egypt because of the Crusades. It is certain that the mosque was not used for official services and that the classes organized and financed by the Fāṭimids were discontinued. The unfortunate professors were obliged to earn their living as best they could, doing clerical work and learning trades. The Fāṭimid books were so completely destroyed that the only manuscript of the great law book *Da'ā'im al-Islām* left in Egypt is the one at Dār al-Kutub in Cairo.

On the other hand, a number of records make it clear that the mosque was not entirely neglected. One historian² said that they raised the height of the minaret and that fiefs and shares in the mint and pottery works of Old Cairo yielded 1067 gold coins a year. Professor Tritton has quoted another author as saying that a scholar named 'Abd-al-Laṭīf, who was probably al-Baghdādī,

Taught in al-Azhar from the first thing in the morning till the fourth hour, presumably, tradition and law; in the middle of the day he taught medicine and other subjects, as it seems, in his own house; in the evening he went back to al-Azhar to meet another set of students. At night he studied for himself. Saladin gave him a salary of 30 dinars and his sons increased that to 100 dinars.³

This passage indicates that private classes were not only held at al-Azhar during the Ayyūbī period, but were even encouraged by the Sulṭān. It was also during this time that the mosque began to gain sanctity as a refuge for the pilgrims, ascetics and mystics, who were attracted to Cairo by the piety and generosity of Saladin.

The closing years of Saladin's life were devoted to fighting in Palestine. Although his tomb is a greatly honored shrine near the great mosque of Damascus, his most important monument is the Citadel, which overlooks the city of Cairo and was built by prisoners captured during the Crusades.

2. Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn-abī-al-Faḍā'il, see *Patrologia*, Tome XII, p. 500.

3. Tritton (*Muslim Educ.*) p. 79.

The Successors of Saladin

The members of the Ayyūbī Dynasty who followed Saladin were men of moderate ability bearing the burden of defending their country from European aggression. During the reign of al-Kāmil ships from Genoa and Venice seized Damietta, threatening to push their way up the Nile. It was a welcome contrast to their hostile spirit when Saint Francis of Assisi visited the Sultān with a message of peace and good will.

Several generations later, al-Ṣāliḥ moved his residence from the Citadel to a new palace on the Island of Roda.⁴ He also formed a bodyguard of Asiatic slaves called *Baḥrī Mamlūks*.⁵ At the close of his reign the French King Louis IX, better known as Saint Louis, landed his troops at Damietta, menacing Cairo. It was at this time that on

Friday a proclamation was brought to al-Qāhirah from the military camp, inciting the people to a holy war. It began 'March forth, light or heavy, and persevere in the path of Allāh, both with your possessions and yourselves, for this is what is best for you, if you but realize it.'⁶ The proclamation was eloquent; brimful of exhortation. It was read to the people from the pulpit of Jāmi' al-Qāhirah⁷ and its recital brought forth tears, lamentation and a raising of voices in a tumult which cannot be described.⁸

In the midst of this crisis, when his heir Tūrān-Shāh was absent, the Sultān al-Ṣāliḥ died. Fearing lest the morale of the army might collapse if his death became known, his widow Shajar al-Durr guarded her husband's death as a secret until the heir could return. When Tūrān-Shāh did reach home, the tide of battle turned in favor of the Muslims and Saint Louis was taken prisoner.

As the Baḥrī Mamlūks played an important part in gaining the victory, they became very aggressive. Tūrān-Shāh was murdered in 1250 and after Shajar al-Durr had reigned as Sultānah for three months, an officer of the guard named 'Izz-al-Dīn Aybak brought to an end the dynasty founded by Saladin, establishing in its place a régime of Mamlūk rule.

4. *al-Rawḍah*.

5. The Arabic plural is *Mamlūk*. They were called *Baḥrī* because the Nile was called the *baḥr* and they lived beside the river.

6. *Qur'ān*, Sūrah IX, verse 41.

7. The Mosque of al-Azhar.

8. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, p. 346.

The Mediaeval College

During the time of Saladin and his successors, the development which most directly affected al-Azhar was the encouragement of the Sunnite system of education.

When Islām first started there were no organized schools, but devoted teachers gathered the boys into the mosques to teach them the Qur'ān. In the course of time these informal groups became organized as schools. The elementary school, *al-kuttāb*, was sometimes held in a shop or private home, but much more often in the colonnades of a mosque, or in rooms attached.

The primary school pupil copied a passage of the Qur'ān on a board. Then he memorized the passage, trying to understand its meaning. After learning it he washed off his board, writing a second passage in the place of the first one. In this way, even before he was eleven years old, a bright boy was able to learn how to read and write, as well as to memorize the entire Qur'ān. In certain schools the boys also learned something about grammar, poetry and arithmetic.

Although most of the boys worked with their fathers on the farms or served as apprentices in the bazaars, after they had completed the elementary school studies, some of them desired to engage in advanced study. A small minority of the young men gained a literary education by working in the government secretariats. Others acquired knowledge by serving as the slaves or employed servants of famous scholars. However, the majority of the boys who desired advanced study attached themselves to private teachers, who sometimes met their students in their own homes, but more often in the mosques. Thus, although the elementary schools cared for the younger boys, the mosques were still cluttered with classes for the older ones.

These classes were of different types. A modest teacher was content to sit on a low stool or mat, with ten or a dozen students in a circle around him. This was the seminar of mediaeval times and an excellent system, as the teacher gave fatherly care to each one of his students. A more ambitious scholar would sit on a chair, leaning against the column of a mosque, while he dictated to his pupils with the help of one or two assistants. If he was a popular authority, he might have one or two hundred in his group. The students took down the lecture by dictation, very often helping their teacher to compile his material in the form

of a book. There was no regular system, but usually a boy remained with one teacher long enough to master one textbook.

In the course of time it came to be the custom for an individual teacher to give his student a certificate⁹ at the end of each course, but as the statement was of a personal nature and written in flowery language, it had little academic value. As there were no true diplomas, no requirements for admission, no grades or examinations, each student was obliged to be his own registrar and faculty adviser.

It does not require much imagination to realize how confusing it must have been in a mosque, when lectures and class discussions were taking place, while pious folk were trying to worship. It was inevitable, therefore, that special school buildings should be provided for the advanced students, as well as for the elementary school boys.

The first school edifice of this sort was probably built at Naysābūr during the first quarter of the eleventh century. This was not a research center, like the scientific institutions already established at Baghdād and Cairo, but a secondary school to teach religion and the humanities.

In 1067 Nizām-al-Mulk, the powerful vizier of the Saljūq Turks, founded a great college at Baghdād. This institution, which was called *al-Madrasah al-Nizāmīyah*, became the model for scores of colleges throughout the Muslim world. These new colleges were founded to combat the heretical and subversive tenets of the Shī'ites, by teaching the orthodox doctrines of Sunnite law and theology.

Some of the colleges were small and incomplete, while others were large institutions, with residential quarters for the students, lecture halls, classrooms and libraries. With five daily prayers, classes from dawn to sunset and an absence of women, life in a college resembled that in a monastery.

Inasmuch as the Fāṭimids were a sect of the Shī'ites and these new colleges were used to combat Shī'ite propaganda, there were no colleges in Egypt during the Fāṭimid period. As ibn-Khallikān explained "When Saladin became the master of Egypt, there was not a single college in that country, because the dynasty which had reigned there followed the doctrine of the Imāmians (Fāṭimids) and did not admit the utility of such establishments."¹⁰

9. *Al-ijāzah*.

10. Khallikān (*Biog. Dict.*) Vol. IV, p. 547.

As Saladin wished to stamp out all trace of the Fāṭimid and Shī'ite ideology and was a champion of orthodox Sunni rule, it was natural for him to introduce the newly developed Sunni college system into Egypt. Accordingly, he established one institution near the tomb of the orthodox jurist al-Shāfi'ī, to the south of the Citadel, and formed another college at the shrine of al-Ḥusayn, across the square from al-Azhar. He also founded three other colleges in the region of Old Cairo, or *al-Fustāt*.

After Saladin died the members of his dynasty built twenty-six colleges, two of which were especially important. The Sulṭān al-Kāmil built the *Kāmiliyah* and some years later al-Šāliḥ Ayyūb established the large institution known as *al-Madrasah al-Šāliḥiyah*.¹¹

The formation of these colleges affected al-Azhar in two definite ways. In the first place, as it was impossible for the old mosque to compete with the new institutions, al-Azhar filled a place of only secondary importance during the time of Saladin and his successors. In the second place, when al-Azhar was finally re-established, its atmosphere and program of studies were similar to the new college system, rather than to that of the Fāṭimids.

As the studies are the most important part of an educational institution and those of the mediaeval Muslim college were very different from the courses of a European seat of learning, it will not be out of place to explain what the college curriculum was like. Needless to say Arabic rather than Latin was the language of instruction, while the Qur'ān instead of the Christian Scriptures was the foundation stone upon which the educational structure was built.

The Mediaeval College Curriculum

A. The Linguistic and Revealed Sciences.

(*'Ulūm al-Lisān al-'Arabī wa'l-'Ulūm al-Naqliyah.*)

The Language (Arabic)	<i>al-lughah</i>
Grammar	<i>al-naḥw wa'l-ṣarf</i>
Rhetoric	<i>al-balāghah</i>
Literature	<i>al-adab</i>
Readings (Quranic)	<i>al-qir'āt</i>
Commentary (Quranic exegesis)	<i>al-tafsīr</i>

11. Suyūṭī, Part II, pp. 156, 157, 160. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part II, p. 340; Part IV, pp. 192 ff. For the college architecture see Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. II, pp. 104-134, 195-198, 234-248, 253.

Traditions	<i>al-ḥadīth</i>
Law	<i>al-fiqh</i>
Jurisprudence (Principles of Jurisprudence)	<i>uṣūl al-fiqh</i>
Theology	<i>al-kalām</i>

B. The Rational Sciences
(*Al-'Ulūm al-'Aqlīyah.*)

Mathematics including division of inheritance	<i>al-riyāḍīyāt</i> (<i>al-farā'id</i>)
Logic	<i>al-manṭiq</i>

Arithmetic was used to fix the times of prayers and feasts, as well as for the division of the shares of inheritance, while logic was employed for the defense of orthodox doctrines. Thus they both came to be accepted as part of the college curriculum.

As the linguistic and revealed sciences¹² have formed the basis of education at al-Azhar ever since it was revived by the Mamlūk Sultāns seven centuries ago, something further should be said about these sciences, before turning to the history of al-Azhar during the Mamlūk period.

Language—*al-lughah*

Although the Qur'ān was revealed in the vernacular of the Quraysh tribe to which the Prophet belonged, the colloquialisms of other tribes found their way into the holy book. No mature Arab was familiar with all of the words of the Qur'ān, while children and foreign converts could not understand the revelations at all.

Thus the first step in Muslim education was to teach the language of the Qur'ān. Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, who lived at al-Baṣrah during the eighth century, compiled the first dictionary and since his time many shorter and less expensive lexicons have facilitated the study of Arabic. In addition to the more technical forms of lexicography, composition (*al-ta'līf*) and penmanship (*al-khatt*) have been included in the program of studies.

Grammar—*al-naḥw wa'l-ṣarf*

Converts to Islām who were familiar with the old classical languages probably started to form a grammar for the Arabs.

12. For a description of the mediaeval sciences, see Khaldūn (Rosenthal) Vol. II, p. 436 to Vol. III, p. 103 and Vol. III, pp. 137-147; 319-371.

Muslim scholars welcomed this development, as it made it possible for them to analyze the Quranic words in an accurate way. Before he died in 793 A.D., Sībawayh wrote his great grammatical textbook, *al-Kitāb*, establishing grammar as one of the important Muslim sciences.

Grammar includes syntax (*al-naḥw*), conjugation and declension (*al-ṣarf*) and word placing (*al-waḍ'*). Students of al-Azhar have devoted a great deal of time to mastering this study, so as to learn how to interpret the Qur'ān accurately and to write Arabic without mistakes.

Rhetoric—*al-balāghah*

Even these linguistic and grammatical studies did not satisfy the Muslim scholars. In order to understand the expressions in the Qur'ān with still greater accuracy and to encourage exact diction for both preaching and writing, they developed the science of rhetoric.

Experts divide this study into three parts: *al-ma'ānī*, which is concerned with clear expression; *al-bayān*, which tries to give the sole meaning indicated, also dealing with simile and metaphor, and *al-badī'* or the perfection of wording, concerned with the embellishment of speech. As al-Azhar has always trained preachers, this subject of the curriculum has been regarded as having great practical importance.

Literature—*al-adab*

Although the Muslims did not favor pagan verse, their language scholars studied the Bedouin poetry, in order to discover colloquialisms throwing light on unfamiliar words in the Qur'ān. The government officials also encouraged poetry for political purposes, as verses which praised them had great propaganda value. It was not long therefore, before poetry became as popular in the palaces and bazaars of the Muslim cities as it was in the black tents of the desert.

Some of the poems dealt with philosophical subjects, others took the form of flattery or satire, while most of them were devoted to women and wine. Numerous anthologies were compiled, enabling students to study Arabic poetry, both for their own enjoyment and for gaining a knowledge of unusual words in the Qur'ān.

During the early period of Islām prose was used only for busi-

ness and administrative purposes. In the course of time, however, members of the government secretariats took so much interest in literary style that they compiled series of epistles, somewhat similar to modern essays.

Then collections of fables and stories like *Kalilah wa Dimnah* and the *Thousand and One Nights*¹³ became increasingly popular. Other contributions to *belles-lettres*¹⁴ were made in mediaeval times and in our modern age prose has become as important as poetry.

In order to supplement the linguistic studies, both poetry and prose were included in the curriculum, even though many of the literary masterpieces were more concerned with liquor and sex than they were with religious truth.

Readings—*al-qirā'āt*

One of the most important duties of a Muslim religious leader was to read the Qur'ān accurately. This, however, was easier said than done.

The Arabic letters b, t, th, n and y all look alike, unless they have dots either over them or under them. In the same way r is like z, unless there is a dot over the z. The vowels, moreover, are not indicated by letters, but by small signs placed above or below the line. During the early years of Islām these dots and signs were omitted and even in later times it required practice to distinguish them. It was inevitable, therefore, that each scholar should read the Qur'ān in his own way.

This lack of uniformity became so serious at the time of the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Qāhir that his two viziers¹⁵ established a reform, which limited the methods of reading the Qur'ān to seven authorized systems. The study of these methods to read the Qur'ān accurately was called the science of *al-qirā'āt*. It was supplemented by the art of intoning (*al-tajwīd*), which made it possible to read aloud to a large audience. The following quotations from al-Suyūṭī show that the reading of the Qur'ān was an important subject at al-Azhar during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

13. *Alf-Laylah wa-Laylah*.

14. *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, the *maqāmah* literature of al-Hamadhānī and al-Harīrī, etc.

15. Ibn-Muqlah and ibn-'Isā were the viziers, helped by the scholar ibn-Mujāhid, 933 A.D. For the seven readings see Nadīm (*Fihrist*) pp. 28-31 and Khaldūn (*Quatremère*) Part II, p. 388; (Rosenthal) Vol. II, p. 440.

There was born at Cairo in 644 (1246 A.D.) 'Alī ibn-Yūsuf, shaykh of the Qur'ān readers in the regions of Egypt. He studied *readings* with experts and was the most eminent teacher of *readings* at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, where the students flocked to him. He died during the last month of 713 (1313 A.D.).

The prayer leader of al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, 'Uthmān ibn-al-Raḥmān, brought the art of reading to a climax. Innumerable throngs were benefitted by his recitals. They became one people and it is even said that the *jinn* also studied under him. He was upright and good, dying when eighty years old in 840 (1436 A.D.) during the eleventh month.¹⁶

Even though they were unable to read, the blind boys were taught how to recite and intone the Qur'ān from memory, so that they could earn a living by chanting the sacred verses at family gatherings and public festivals.

Commentary—*al-tafsīr*

Although the linguistic studies helped the scholars to understand the meaning of the words of the Qur'ān, they did not throw much light on the significance of the individual revelations. Accordingly, it was not long before an effort was made to collect sayings and anecdotes, which recorded when and where the Quranic passages were revealed.

Verse eleven of Sūrah LXII of the Qur'ān was, for instance, explained by the following quotation from one of Muḥammad's associates:

While we were praying with the Prophet a caravan of camels arrived from Syria, loaded with provisions. The Believers immediately rushed over to the caravan, leaving only twelve men with the Prophet. It was on this occasion that the verse was revealed, 'When they see some trading or distraction, they rush headlong to it, leaving thee standing. Say, what is God's is better than amusement or trading.'¹⁷

In the course of time innumerable volumes were written, interpreting the language and recording traditions, which explained the meaning of Quranic passages. Some of these books

16. Suyūṭī, Part I, p. 241 and 242, with some of the genealogical names omitted.

17. Bukhārī (*Les Traditions Islamiques*) Vol. II, p. 7.

were short and easy to understand, while others were very long and technical. One work, for instance, devoted eighteen pages to the first seven verses of the Qur'ān, with complicated explanations for every verse.¹⁸

Commentary, or Quranic exegesis, was exceedingly important, because unscrupulous men used it to serve their own purposes. In Baghdād the free thinkers used it to defend heretical doctrines, while the Fāṭimids used it in Egypt to confirm their ideology of divine right to rule. The mystics used a verse like "We are God's and to him we return"¹⁹ to defend their ideal of ecstatic union with Allāh. Because the Qur'ān was the foundation of the law, dishonest lawyers were also tempted to use false interpretations of Quranic verses to win their cases in court. Last but not least, theologians used exegesis to uphold their particular dogmas, so that almost every phase of mediaeval life was affected by the ways in which this science of commentary was employed.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there are over five thousand books in the library of al-Azhar, as well as extensive courses in the curriculum, dealing with this important subject.

Traditions—*al-ḥadīth*

As many a bright boy has learned the whole Qur'ān by heart by the time that he was ten years old, it is obvious that the Quranic revelations are not all inclusive enough to settle every one of life's problems. The Prophet revealed the verses of the Qur'ān during some sort of spiritual seizure. The words which he spoke under normal conditions were not included in the holy book, and were not regarded as revelations issuing from Allāh.

On the other hand, it was Muḥammad himself who, more than any one else, was able to explain the meaning of the revelations and to supplement them by his own prophetic ideas. Accordingly, the things which he was reported to have said and the way in which he behaved came to be only second in importance to the Qur'ān itself. The study of the utterances and precedents of the Prophet was called the "science of al-Ḥadīth," which rapidly became one of the basic subjects of the Muslim curriculum.

Although the Fāṭimids and other Shī'ites only acknowledged as authoritative the traditions originating from the Prophet him-

18. *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* of abū-Hayyān.

19. Qur'ān, Sūrah II, verse 156.

self and the members of his family, the Sunnites also honored sayings quoted by the Prophet's Companions. These traditions were in the form of sayings, anecdotes and reminiscences. Not only was the name of the man or woman who originated the traditions recorded, but also the chain of persons handing down the tradition from one generation to another.

The authorities divided a tradition into two parts—*al-isnād* or the sequence of persons quoting it, and *al-matn*, which was the actual saying or anecdote. In a most laborious way they studied the genealogies and reputations of the persons who handed down these quotations, in order to find out whether they had good memories and trustworthy characters. The following example illustrates what a tradition was like:

Aḥmad ibn-Hanbal quoted “abū-Mu‘āwiyah as saying that Dāwūd ibn-abī-Hind passed on from abū-Harb ibn-abī-al-Aswad from abū-Dharr, who related that the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and give him peace, said to us, ‘If one of you grows angry while standing, let him sit down, or perhaps his anger will cool off if he lies down!’”²⁰

Just as in connection with commentary, dishonest persons of all sorts tried to use traditions to suit their own designs. As commercial lawsuits, questions of inheritance, doctrinal interpretations and political issues often depended upon the precedents and sayings of the Prophet, there was the temptation not only to misquote genuine traditions, but also to fabricate false ones. Because of this dangerous practice the Sunni scholars regarded only six²¹ of the many collections of traditions as being trustworthy.

Two of these great collections were considered to be so trustworthy that they were called *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, which means the “sound” or “true.” One of them was compiled by al-Bukhārī, who travelled for sixteen years and selected less than 7,500 traditions from a total of over half a million. His collection became so sacred that it was often read at al-Azhar and other mosques at times of national calamity. The other work called *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* was compiled by Muslim ibn-al-Ḥajjāj.

20. From the *Sunan* of abū-Dāwūd, Part II, p. 186. (al-Kastaniyah Press, Cairo, 1863.)

21. The six collections were compiled by al-Bukhārī, 810-870; Muslim ibn-al-Ḥajjāj, died 875; abū-Dāwūd, died 888, al-Tirmidhī, died about 892; ibn-Mājah, who died 886, and al-Nasā'ī, who died 915.

The material in one of these great compendiums supplements the Qur'ān by giving instructions for every phase of religious and secular behavior, from the administration of justice to brushing the teeth. Modern scholars are not sure how many of the traditions in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī really originated with the Prophet and his immediate associates, but during the Middle Ages the pious Muslims had so much faith in the great collection that they used it as a textbook for behavior, as well as for devotional purposes.

Some of the traditions had to do with raiding. "The Prophet of Allāh forbade plundering and mutilation." "The Prophet forbade the killing of women and children."²² There were also many financial traditions, such as the following ones about usury and speculation. "Do not exchange gold for gold except for equal value, or silver for silver except for equal value, but exchange gold for silver and silver for gold as you wish." "The Apostle of Allāh forbade selling dates before they were ripe and when he was asked what ripe meant he said, 'When they are red or yellow, that is, edible'.²³

Many of the traditions were about religious matters. A few examples help to illustrate what they were like "Ā'ishah had some cloth with patterns on it stored in a corner of her room. One day the Prophet said, 'Take away this material; the designs distract me when I come to pray'." "The Apostle of Allāh used to pray on a little mat." "When Ramaḍān comes, the doors of heaven open." "Do not pray during menstruation."²⁴

Ubaydah related a doctrinal tradition when he told how the Prophet said that, whatever a man's actions might have been previously, he would go to heaven provided he testified "That there is no divinity except Allāh, unique without associates; that Muḥammad is His devotee and His messenger; that Jesus is also a devotee of Allāh as well as His messenger and His word, formed in the womb of Mary as a divine emanation; that heaven is true and hell is true."²⁵

There are also some very popular sayings attributed to the Prophet, which reflect his spirit of altruism. "'Do you love your Creator, love your fellowmen first.'" "Man is the brother of man, whether he likes him or not." "All creatures are God's family and

22. Bukhārī (*Traditions*) Vol. II, p. 151.

23. *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 39, 43.

24. *ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 143, 146, 608, 122.

25. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 516.

the most beloved by Him are the most useful to His family.” “The ink of the learned is as precious as the blood of the martyrs.” “It is better to teach one hour in the night than to pray the whole night through.”

These examples can only give a very superficial idea of the extent and importance of the “science of al-Ḥadīth.” The subject is such a vast one that a study of al-Bukhārī used to require two hundred and ten lessons during two years of work. The arduous work was, however, necessary as both legal and theological studies depended to a large degree on prerequisite courses in *al-ḥadīth*.

Law—*al-fiqh*

Muslim law is based upon the ordinances of the Qur’ān as it was revealed to the people of seventh century Arabia. When the Muslim community became a world-wide empire, with millions of foreign people to govern and vast commercial enterprises to control, it became necessary for the legal authorities to supplement the Qur’ān by using the sayings and precedents of the Prophet, as well as the customs of the subject peoples. The great legal system which was developed is called *al-Sharī‘ah*. It includes *al-fiqh*, or the law proper, and *usūl al-fiqh*, or jurisprudence, which is the study of the sources of the law and the means of its development. The term *al-fiqh*, however, is often translated into English as “jurisprudence.”

During the Fāṭimid régime these subjects were taught according to the Shī‘ite code, but when al-Azhar was re-established by the Mamlūks, Sunnite studies were substituted for those of the Shī‘ites and Fāṭimids. There were four generally accepted codes of Sunnite law. Although the small colleges only attempted to deal with one or two of these codes, the large institutions including al-Azhar taught all four of them.

These four authorized Sunnite systems of law were founded by the following jurists: (1) Abū-Ḥanīfah al-Nu‘mān, not to be confused with the author of the Fāṭimid legal code, was brought up at al-Kūfah but buried at Baghdād in 767. He was a theoretical scholar, whose legal code was tolerant and progressive. (2) Mālik ibn-Anas, who lived at al-Madīnah from about 715 to 795, was a practical jurist, pious and ardent in collecting traditions. (3) Muḥammad ibn-Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, who was born at Ghazzah in 767, died at Cairo in 820. He spent most of his life at Baghdād during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, but he passed his last years at

Cairo, where his tomb is still a popular shrine. One of his principal contributions was to determine the four legitimate sources for the development of jurisprudence. The four basic principles are (a) the Qur'ān, (b) *al-sunnah*, or the sayings and precedents of the Prophet, (c) consensus of opinion, or *al-ijmā'*, and (d) analogy, or *al-qiyās*. The Muslim curriculum includes courses on the sources or principles of jurisprudence, called *uṣūl al-fiqh*, to supplement the general study of the law itself. (4) The fourth jurist, who founded a school or code of Sunnite law was Aḥmad ibn-Hanbal. He lived from 780 to 855, often persecuted by the heterodox caliphs of Baghdād, because he championed the cause of orthodoxy. As his system was that of a theologian rather than a judge, it has survived only among the Wahhābīs of Arabia.

The codes of these four famous jurists differed about so many minor points that only an unusually brilliant student attempted to master all four systems at one time. Even the gaining of a thorough knowledge of one single code required many years of faithful study, but many a student at al-Azhar was willing to do the work required, so as to become a legal authority, perhaps even a judge or a *muftī*.

As has already been explained in connection with the first textbook used at al-Azhar, a Muslim code of jurisprudence dealt with every phase of mediaeval life. Detailed instructions were given for ritualistic purity, prayer, the poor tax, the pilgrimage, marriage, divorce and inheritance, trade, court trials, oaths and witnesses, treatment of slaves, food, drink and clothing, fighting, ethical living and many other topics. Thus the law was not merely a theoretical study, but also a most practical one.

In mediaeval times a young man could find a brilliant career in one of two fields of activity. Either he could enter military service or become trained as a legal authority. Al-Azhar became a great center for the study of jurisprudence and it was the final goal of many of the students to attain eminent positions in the judicial systems of the cities where they lived.

Theology—*al-kalām*

Although the Qur'ān was a spiritual revelation rather than a doctrinal system, and Muḥammad was a prophet rather than a theologian, it was not long before the Muslim scholars became interested in theological discussion. Freedom of the will and predestination, sin and judgment, heaven and hell, creation or pre-

existence of the Qur'ān, the legitimacy of ascetic and mystic practices, the unity and attributes of Allāh, and other questions occupied the minds of the religious leaders.

The Caliph al-Ma'mūn, who ruled at Baghdād from 813 to 833, encouraged two important movements. One was the revival of Greek science, which inevitably caused rational thinking and agnosticism. The other was the theological system of the *Mu'tazilah*, who used Greek logic and dialectic methods to prove the validity of their doctrines. Three of their tenets aroused the bitter opposition of the orthodox.

In the first place, they held that on account of His oneness Allāh could not have attributes²⁶ like knowledge, power, speech, hearing and seeing. In the second place, because of His justice, Allāh would not first preordain man to sin and then send him to hell. Man has freedom of the will, so that it is his own fault if he does wrong. In the third place, the Qur'ān is not the pre-existent speech of Allāh, but something created by Him.

The conservatives opposed these doctrines so strenuously, that there was a great deal of ill feeling at Baghdād for over half a century. It was, therefore, a great relief when a scholar named al-Ash'arī²⁷ came to the rescue with a system of belief which most of the people could accept. He lived from 874 until about 936, spending the first part of his life at al-Baṣrah. He used the logic and dialectic methods of the *Mu'tazilah* to refute their own tenets. With great tact and mental agility he formed compromise doctrines, which were so generally accepted that they became the foundation stones of the theology of orthodox Islām.

When the Sunnite colleges were founded during the eleventh century, one of the most important subjects of the curriculum was the study of this orthodox theology, which is called in Arabic *al-kalām*, *al-tawḥīd*, or *uṣūl al-dīn*.

While theology was becoming a mediaeval science, another phase of religion became important. This was the *Ṣūfī* movement, which at the start took the form of rigorous living and asceticism, but before long also included mystic beliefs and practices culminating in ecstatic union with God. As this movement was to a certain extent a reaction against the pedantic scholasticism and spiritual sterility of the orthodox scholars, it is not surprising that

26. Attributes are *al-ṣifāt* and justice *al-'adl*.

27. Abū-al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn-Isma'īl al-Ash'arī, see Khallikān (*Biog. Dict.*) Vol. II, p. 227.

the religious leaders were unsympathetic with the Ṣūfis. Finally, however, there appeared a great saint and scholar, who at one time vitalized the religion of the scholars and made the Ṣūfī movement respected. This new leader was known as al-Ghazzālī.

Abū-Hāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī,²⁸ who was born at Ṭūs in 1058, lived during the period when the 'Abbāsid Caliphate was controlled by the Saljūq Turks and threatened by the Crusades. After studying the Muslim sciences and Greek philosophy, he became a teacher in the Nizāmiyah College, which had been founded at Baghdād during his childhood. Probably because of a nervous breakdown he left the College to become an ascetic and mystic, wandering far and wide in search of truth. In 1105 he returned to teaching, this time at Naysābūr, but six years later when he was fifty-three years old his remarkable life came to an end. During these years of teaching and travel he wrote some of the greatest books appearing in the Middle Ages.

Al-Ghazzālī gave the orthodox theologians such a respect for mysticism and ascetic piety that the system²⁹ of the Ṣūfis was included in the program of studies of al-Azhar and similar institutions. He also brought new life to the stagnant thought of the eleventh century by introducing spiritual and ethical ideals of conduct. By encyclopaedic learning, saintly living and mystical power of spirit, al-Ghazzālī brought Muslim theology to its culmination.

Although other scholars developed new systems and many writers compiled learned textbooks, the theological courses were chiefly based upon the doctrines adopted at the time of al-Ash'arī and al-Ghazzālī. Students planning to become teachers of religion and mosque leaders naturally required a thorough theological training. Law students also studied theology, as government and religion are closely bound together in Islām.

The Rational Sciences—*al-'ulūm al-'aqlīyah*

Because al-Ash'arī used logic as a means of combatting the arguments of the heretics, it was not long before logic, or *al-mantiq*, became a subject of the college curriculum, even though its origin was Greek rather than Quranic. A certain amount of mathematics was also taught, chiefly in connection

28. His name is also written al-Ghazālī. See Khalikān (*Wafayāt*) Vol. I, p. 463; (*Biog. Dict.*) Vol. I, p. 80; Vol. II, p. 621.

29. *al-taṣawwuf*.

with the Muslim system of dividing inheritance and the fixing of the times for prayer and feasts.

Although medical courses were affiliated with some of the most important colleges,³⁰ medicine was as a rule taught in the hospitals. During certain periods, when there was a considerable amount of free thinking, philosophy, astronomy and higher mathematics may have been taught to special students in the colleges. As, however, the mediaeval period progressed, these subjects, as well as astrology and the natural sciences, were not regarded as deserving a place in the orthodox curriculum. Accordingly, exceptional students wishing to study these sciences were obliged to work with private teachers in their own homes. Certainly alchemy and the occult sciences were not favored by the religious educators.

It is hoped that this introduction to the courses of the curriculum will help persons unacquainted with Muslim education to appreciate what the studies were like at al-Azhar, when the old mosque was re-established by the Mamlūk sultāns. This revival of al-Azhar starts an entirely new chapter in the history of the institution, which was destined to become increasingly important during the Mamlūk period, in spite of plague, earthquake and war.

30. Examples are *al-Mustanşiriyyah* in Baghdād and *al-Nāṣiriyyah* built at Cairo in 1296.

The Mamlūk Sulṭāns

The Baḥrī Mamlūks

- 1250-1257 Aybak
1257-1259 Nūr-al-Dīn 'Alī
1259-1260 Quṭuz
1260-1277 Baybars
1266 revival of al-Azhar.
1277-1279 Sons of Baybars; Barakah and Salāmish
1279-1290 Qalāwūn
1290-1293 Khalīl al-Ashraf
1293-1340 al-Nāṣir
Interregnums, Kitbughā, 1294-1296; Lājīn, 1296-1298;
Baybars II, 1308-1309.
1340-1361 Sons of al-Nāṣir
Abū-Bakr, Qūjūq, Aḥmad, Ismā'īl, al-Kāmil, Sha'bān,
al-Muẓaffar Ḥājji, al-Ḥasan, al-Ṣāliḥ.
1361-1382 Grandsons and Great Grandsons of al-Nāṣir.

The Burjī Mamlūks

- 1382-1398 al-Zāhir Sayf-al-Dīn Barqūq
Interregnum, al-Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥājji, 1389-1390.
1398-1412 al-Nāṣir Faraj
Interregnum, al-Manṣūr, 1405-1406.
Caliph, al-Musta'in, 1412.

- 1412-1421 al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh
Two infant sons of al-Mu'ayyad and Ṭaṭar.
- 1422-1438 Barsbāy
Son of Barsbāy, 1438
- 1438-1453 Jaqmaq
Son of Jaqmaq, 1453
- 1453-1460 Īnāl
1460-1461 Son of Īnāl
1461-1467 Khushqadam
1467 Yalbāy
1467-1468 Timurbughā
1468-1495 Qā'it-Bāy
Restoration of al-Azhar.
- 1495-1498 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad
1498-1499 al-Zāhir Qāṣawh
1499-1500 Jān-Balāt
1500-1516 Qāṣawh al-Ghawrī
1516-1517 al-Ashraf Ṭūmān-Bāy

The Mamlūk Sultāns

The Revival of al-Azhar

WHEN speaking about the successors of Saladin, it was mentioned that the Sultān al-Ṣāliḥ built a new palace on an island of the Nile. As he did not trust his dissatisfied Egyptian subjects, he purchased Asiatic slaves to serve as his bodyguard. These slaves, who were called Baḥrī Mamlūks,¹ became so powerful that after the death of al-Ṣāliḥ and the devastating invasion of the French king, Saint Louis, they gained control of the government. They murdered the heir of al-Ṣāliḥ, placing his famous widow Shajar al-Durr on the throne for three months. Then one of their officers named 'Izz-al-Dīn Aybak married Shajar al-Durr, assuming the title of Sultān and establishing Mamlūk rule over the lands once belonging to the family of Saladin. It was during this Mamlūk period that al-Azhar was re-established in an important role.

In the first place, al-Azhar was called upon to help keep alive a knowledge of the Arabic language, as the Mamlūks themselves spoke Turkish dialects. When they were adolescent boys these Mamlūks were purchased from the tribes of Central Asia and what is today Southern Russia, to serve as soldiers. Placed in barracks, they were trained to be cavalymen; their sole loyalty was to their masters and their only ambition to gain enough power to make life worth living.

Although they usually learned how to read and write, as well as to know something about Islām, their principal training was in horsemanship and the use of arms. Thus their knowledge of Arabic was so superficial that the language of the Qur'ān would have been sadly neglected if al-Azhar and similar institutions had not come to the rescue.

A second responsibility of the colleges and mosque schools was to maintain a respect for the (*Sharī'ah*) law. The Mamlūk was a

1. The Arabic plural is *Mamlūk*. They were called *Baḥrī* as they lived by the river (*al-baḥr*).

soldier of fortune, tempted to settle matters by force. If he showed that he had courage and intelligence, he was promoted to become an officer or amīr, with his own horse to ride and a number of men under his command. Then, if he had unusual ability, he became a high official, with a fief of his own so that he could purchase slaves and support his own troops. As these amīrs tried to increase their power by engaging in violent quarrels and exploiting the populace, they often showed a contempt for the law.

When, moreover, the most powerful officer became the Sultān he was apt to confiscate the property, household and slave soldiers of his rivals, disregarding the Quranic laws of ownership and inheritance. When, for instance, Taghrī-Birdī, the father of the historian, died, the Sultān "confiscated all of his wealth and took into his own service his many hundreds of Mamlūks."²

It was, therefore, exceedingly important for the religious educators to uphold the (*Sharī'ah*) law as the only means of protecting the people's rights. Courses in jurisprudence and the studies connected with it were essential during this period of violence and oppression.

A third task for al-Azhar was to teach the Quranic principles of ethics and social justice, during an age when the ruling classes were scandalously selfish and extravagant. There was, for instance, a high official named Āqbughā, who erected the building in which the library of al-Azhar has been located during the past half century. When he was sent by the Sultān to arrest a rebellious Mamlūk, he found him in a garden with sixty concubines, in addition to the female members of his family and domestic staff.³ Another spendthrift official⁴ celebrated his son's circumcision by having the whole quarter of the city illuminated, with men and women singers to entertain the populace.

Like all *nouveaux riches*, the Mamlūks loved display. Whenever the Sultān rode forth to lead a military campaign or to attend a festival, it was with great pomp and a large retinue of attendants. The great amīrs lived in palatial residences with beautiful gardens; they clothed their horsemen with brilliant trappings and encouraged the Egyptian love of feast days. When there were special celebrations such as circumcisions, they turned night

2. *History of Egypt*, 1382-1469, of abū-Muḥāsīn ibn-Taghrī-Birdī, trans. William Popper (Univ. of California Press, 1954) Intr. p. XV. The historian's father died as commander-in-chief about 1410, when Faraj was the sultān.

3. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. II, p. 478.

4. Iyās (857-872) p. 173; (*Hist. Mamlouks*) pp. 204, 305.

into day with beacons made of sand soaked with naphtha. The most costly type of display, however, was not in connection with life, but death. It was the custom for the Sultān and his leading officials to build great tombs, attached to mosques, schools and dervisheries. One of the most extraordinary things about these half savage Mamlūks was the fact that they produced some of the most beautiful buildings in the world.

As the tradesmen and peasants were shamefully exploited to pay for these palaces and tombs, a great gulf existed between the rich and the poor. It is no wonder, therefore, that the populace depended upon al-Azhar and other religious centers to uphold the Prophet's ideals of social justice.

During a period when the officials were exceedingly brutal, the shaykhs of al-Azhar were, in the fourth place, obliged to keep alive Muḥammad's love of forgiveness and kindness. A few examples will explain how cruel the Mamlūks were.

In 1298 the murderers of the Sultān al-Ashraf had their hands cut off and hung around their necks. They were "nailed to camels" and taken past their homes, where their wives and servants were frantic. In 1498 the Sultān had a male singer, guilty of using political satire, bastinadoed and paraded naked on a donkey, saying "This is the punishment for anyone who talks too much and sticks his nose into things that are not his business." In 1472 the leading rebel chief of Syria and his brothers were brought to Cairo. Singers and drummers met them at the north gate of the city. Then the rebels entirely naked were nailed to boards attached to camels and paraded to the southern gateway, where they remained suspended for thirty-six hours before they breathed their last. In the meantime, the followers captured with them were cut in two.⁵ When the Sultān Khushqadam was dying, even his physicians were afraid of being treated as rebels. The officials blamed them for being negligent, threatening to scourge them as the doctors of Barsbāy had been tortured. When one of the physicians fled he was caught and promptly put in prison.⁶ No more examples are needed to illustrate how urgent it was for religious leaders to combat cruelty of this kind.

Al-Azhar served the people in a fifth way, by providing shelter at times of danger. Rival officers often encouraged their slave

5. Iyās (*Hist. Mamlouks*) pp. 85, 86, 458. Poliak, pp. 257, 260, 263. Compare Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, p. 796.

6. Iyās (857-872) p. 79.

soldiers to engage in street fighting, at the expense of the populace. As Stanley Lane-Poole has written:

The terrified people would close their shops, run to their houses, and shut the great gates which isolated the various quarters and markets of the city; and rival factions of Mamlūks would ride through the streets that remained open, pillaging the houses of their adversaries, carrying off women and children, holding pitched battles in the road, and discharging arrows and spears from the windows upon the enemy in the street below.⁷

Because al-Azhar was in the central position, it is easy to imagine how many terrified people fled to the mosque, to seek refuge and to invoke Allāh for mercy.

Finally, al-Azhar was needed during this Mamlūk period to maintain religion on a high plane in the midst of fanaticism and superstition. It is not surprising that the people were fanatical after two hundred years of aggression on the part of the Crusaders.⁸ When, therefore, a Christian rode a horse with fine trappings, the ragged Muslims on foot became so angry that for a time Christians and Jews were forbidden to ride on horses or mules and obliged to wear blue or yellow turbans.

The common people were reduced to such poverty and ignorance that they were superstitious as well as fanatical. Although the rulers built mosques and colleges in the cities, they did very little to encourage education in the rural districts. Even in Cairo they patronized so many Sufi ascetics with their extreme fatalism and exotic rites, that well educated teachers were needed to champion the orthodox doctrines and ordinances of Islām.

There was, therefore, such an urgent need to preserve the true culture and religion revealed by the Prophet, that it was a significant event in Egyptian history when al-Azhar was re-established, after having been reduced by Saladin to the position of an unimportant mosque.

Baybars,⁹ the man responsible for the revival of al-Azhar, was born some time before 1228 among the nomadic tribesmen of Southern Russia. As a boy of fourteen years old he was captured by a hostile chief, who sold him to a slave dealer from Sīwās. He

7. Lane-Poole (*Cairo*) p. 75.

8. For examples of fanaticism see Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, pp. 910-923; Vol. II, pp. 922, 925.

9. Al-Mālik al-Zāhir Rukn-al-Dīn Baybars, called al-Bunduqdārī after the officer who purchased him. He reigned as Sultān, 1260-1277.

was then passed on to a market in Syria, but as one of his eyes was imperfect, nobody was willing to pay a high price for him. Finally, after purchasing him at Ḥamah an officer took him to serve as a slave soldier in Egypt, where he was trained to ride horseback and to use the weapons of a cavalryman. When he was about eighteen his master's possessions were confiscated by the Sultān al-Šāliḥ, who made him a member of the palace guard.

In 1249, when the French King Saint Louis attacked Damietta, (or Dimyāt) it was Baybars who led the cavalry charge, which turned the tide of battle and led to the capture of the French monarch. Subsequently, he was largely responsible for the events leading to the overthrow of the dynasty of Saladin and the elevating of the Mamlūk officer Aybak to become the Sultān. As the third Mamlūk ruler, Quṭuz, was unfair to Baybars, whose leadership helped to beat back a Mongolian invasion,¹⁰ Baybars murdered his chief, establishing himself as the Sultān in Quṭuz' place.

Baybars proved to be an able administrator, responsible for many important public works. During the early years of his reign he restored numerous old buildings, one of which was al-Azhar. He repaired the mosque at the request of one of his officers, who built a private house adjoining the main entrance gate and desired to see al-Azhar regain its lost prestige. In speaking about this official an Arabic historian says that he "was one of the leading officers of the state and one of the closest to al-Malik al-Zāhir (Baybars) who, during periods of absence, made him his deputy in Egypt."¹¹

The officer, whose name was Aydamir,¹² evidently persuaded the Sultān to give the official authorization and the money required to restore the mosque building, which had been sadly neglected since the overthrow of the Fāṭimids. The historian al-Maqrīzī wrote that Aydamir "repaired the weak walls and corners, provided whitewash, mended the roofing and made a new pavement, providing mats and hangings, so that once more it became a place of worship in the heart of the city. He also made there a beautiful *maqṣūrah*."¹³

About the same time Aydamir obtained a legal decision, authorizing the holding of Friday services at al-Azhar. As has already

10. Quṭuz defeated the Mongols at the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, 1260.

11. Taghrī-Birdī (*Nujūm*) Vol. VII, p. 227.

12. 'Izz-al-Dīn Aydamir ibn-'Abd-Allāh al-Hillī.

13. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 52.

been mentioned, the sultāns of the dynasty of Saladin did not permit the Friday service to be held at al-Azhar, because their Shāfi'ī code of law allowed only one congregational service to be held in any one city and they used the Mosque of al-Hākim rather than al-Azhar for the Friday prayers in al-Qāhirah. As Baybars adopted the less rigid Ḥanafī code, Aydamir was able to obtain official permission to revive the Friday service at al-Azhar.

Two Arab historians have recorded this event. Al-Maqrīzī wrote that "On Friday the eighteenth of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 665 (Dec. 17, 1266) the Friday service was re-established at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar."¹⁴ Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn-abī-al-Faḍā'il recorded that during the year six hundred and sixty-five the

Sultān instituted the Friday prayer at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar. . . . Although it had been used as a place of worship for the observation of the five prayers, it had fallen into a serious state of disorder. When al-Hillī (Aydamir) built his residence in its vicinity, he restored the parts in disrepair, which was the reason for re-establishing the Friday service. The Friday prayer was held there, although some of the members of the 'ulamā' raised objections. This was on the eighteenth of Rabi' al-Ākhir of this year.¹⁵

The month mentioned in the first quotation was the third one of the Muslim year, while the month referred to in the second account was the fourth one.

Five days before reviving the Friday service, Baybars placed a new wooden pulpit in the sanctuary and, although he did not attend the inaugural service in person, he provided financial aid and restored the depleted endowments of the mosque.

It is possible that Aydamir was appointed to a position outside of Egypt or died before the renovation of al-Azhar was completed, as another official named Bilik¹⁶ seems to have brought the work to its final conclusion. He was the treasurer and deputy of the Sultān, who provided a *maqṣūrah* in which he organized classes to study the Shāfi'ī law. The Arabic word *maqṣūrah* is used for an apartment and here evidently refers to a classroom. Bilik may have created a new room in addition to the one mentioned in connection with Aydamir, or he may have completed

14. *ibid.*, Part IV, p. 52. See also Suyūṭī, Part II, pp. 138, 139, 155.

15. *Patrologia*, Tome XII, p. 498.

16. Badr-al-Dīn Bilik ibn-'Abd-Allāh, *khāzindār* and *nā'ib*. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, pp. 447, 532, 556-557, 641-643. Taghrī-Birdī (*Nujūm*) Vol. VII, p. 98 note 2, pp. 144, 150.

the work begun by his predecessor. Whether these officials made one or two new classrooms,¹⁷ it is probable that the *maqṣūrah* was formed by partitioning off part of a loggia by means of carved wood screening.

At this time funds were provided to support teachers of jurisprudence, theology, tradition and Quranic reading. As there were seven teachers for the reading, or *al-qirā'āt*, it is evident that there was one for each of the seven authorized methods of reading the Qur'ān. Students once more came to the mosque to attend regular classes, while high officials appeared to hear the Qur'ān explained. At the same time a prayer leader, or imām, was appointed to conduct the Friday services and the mosque was used for the issuing of public notices. In 1266 and 1267, for instance, ordinances were announced forbidding the use of hashīsh and liquor and demanding that wine shops and houses of prostitution should be closed.¹⁸ Thus, after many years of humiliation, al-Azhar was re-established as a sanctuary for congregational worship, a school of higher learning and a center for official business.

It seems strange that the restoration of the great mosque should have been brought about by Baybars, who started life as an illiterate nomad on the steppes of Russia. During the later years of his career this powerful Sultān had little time to give to al-Azhar, as he was obliged to defend his country against the Crusaders on one side and an allied force of Saljūq Turks and Mongols on the other.

Although Baybars himself did not bring the Crusades to a close, his successors Qalāwūn and Khalīl al-Ashraf finally drove the Europeans from Asiatic soil. In the meantime the Amīr Ṭarṭāy was ordered to make repairs in al-Azhar and when 'Alā'-al-Dīn ibn-Marwānah directed the judiciary, he and ibn-al-Su'ratī improved the mosque, while several chief justices served as preachers.¹⁹ There must have been a progressive spirit at this time, as a woman²⁰ was permitted to study at al-Azhar.

17. It has been suggested that Aydamir and Bīlik each built one of the loggias on the left and right hand sides of the central courtyard, but it is much more likely that these spacious colonnades were constructed as part of the original mosque or during the Fātimid period.

18. For the imām and ordinances see Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, p. 711; (*Mawā'iz*) Part I, ch. xxxix, sect. 14, 16.

19. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭat*) Part IV, pp. 14, 15; (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, pp. 771-773, Vol. II, p. 647. Taghrī-Birdī (*Nujūm*) Vol. VIII, p. 82.

20. Im-Zaynab Fātimah bint-'Abbās al-Baghdādī, who died 1314. See Maqrīzī (*Khiṭat*) Part IV, p. 294; *Suyūṭī*, Part I, p. 182.

Al-Nāṣir and his Descendants

As the great Sultān Qalāwūn's elder son, Khalīl al-Ashraf, died prematurely in 1293, a nine year old brother called al-Nāṣir became the successor. Although during the first years of his reign the child was dominated by his Mamlūk officers, he eventually gained control of his realm, ruling with one short interruption until 1340.

The beginning of this reign was full of excitement. The terrible Mongolians once more invaded Syria, storming Damascus. The shaykhs of al-Azhar and other mosques declared a holy war, or *jihād*. A bureau was established below the Cairo Citadel, where funds were collected. Officials, wealthy merchants and shop-keepers were urged to make contributions, while peasants and artisans were recruited for the army.

Although his reign was upset by war and calamity, al-Nāṣir distinguished himself as a patron of learning.²¹ Near to where the Golden Gate of the great Fāṭimid palace had once stood, he completed his father's famous hospital and founded a great college, which rivalled al-Azhar as a seat of learning.

The Arab historian al-Maqrīzī has left us an account of an exciting event which occurred in 1303, during the early years of al-Nāṣir's reign.

On Thursday the thirtieth of Dhū-al-Ḥijjah at the time of the morning prayer, the whole earth quaked with a terrific noise of cracking walls and roofs. Persons on foot reeled and those riding fell off, so that it seemed to the people that the heavens were meeting the earth. Men and women poured into the streets; terror and fear preventing the women from covering their faces. Crying, tumult and lamentation waxed great while houses collapsed and walls split. The minarets of the mosques and colleges toppled over. Many women brought forth what they were bearing in their wombs. Violent winds blew and the waters of the Nile overflowed until they hurled boats an arrow's cast from the shore. Then the waters receded leaving dry land with a snapping of hawsers, while the wind swept up the boats in deep water, hurling them on the banks.²²

As people fled, robbers pillaged their houses, not a home being left undisturbed. Tents were pitched from Būlāq to al-

21. The hospital was *al-Maristān al-Manṣūrī* and the college *al-Madrasah al-Nāṣiriyyah*.

22. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. I, pp. 942-944.

Rawḍah, but most of the people spent the night in the mosque courtyards and on the next day sought the help of Allāh at the Friday service.

Among the famous buildings which were destroyed there was the Mosque of 'Amr ibn-al-'Ās²³ which the Amīr Sallār, the Deputy Sultān, was required to rebuild. Most of the walls of the Hākīmī Mosque in al-Qāhirah collapsed and its two minarets fell down. The Amīr Baybars, the Jāshnakīr, was given orders to reconstruct it. The Mosque of al-Azhar was also wrecked, so that the Amīr Sallār assisted by the Amīr Sunqur al-A'sar was obliged to rebuild it.

It is probable that the roof, arches, minaret and many of the columns of al-Azhar had to be restored, while the pavements, windows, outer walls and water system needed extensive repairs. It was either at this time or during the Fāṭimid period that there was placed near the prayer niche "A board of the Ship of Noah and a strip of hide from the Cow of the Children of Israel."²⁴

Sixteen years after the earthquake there died

On the tenth of Rabī' al-Ākhir the Amīr 'Alā'-al-Dīn Ṭaybars al-Khāzindārī, Naqīb of the army and one of the officers of the Drum Corps. He was buried in his college next to al-Jāmi' al-Azhar. He had been an army commander for nearly twenty-four years, during which time he never accepted bribes. He was also a money lender and the possessor of a large fortune.

He built the college adjoining al-Azhar, providing it with generous endowments. When it was finished they brought him a financial statement, which he washed out with water, dispensing with an audit and saying, 'We do not keep accounts for what is offered to Allāh.'²⁵

This college is called *al-Ṭaybarsīyah*. Originally it was outside of al-Azhar, but with two of its windows pierced through the west wall of the mosque courtyard. Today it is inside of a new gateway, forming part of the library of al-Azhar. It has a very handsome room decorated with marble and a prayer niche between the windows. Ṭaybars established Shāfi'ī studies there and when a mosque which he built near the Nile collapsed, he moved the

23. The mosque built in Old Cairo when the Muslims first conquered Egypt; see preceding note.

24. Mubārak, Part IV, p. 16.

25. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. II, p. 199.

Şūfis from the wrecked building to his new college adjoining al-Azhar.

A short time after Ṭaybars constructed his college, it happened that:

When the people went out from the Friday prayers at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar in al-Qāhirah, they saw the populace in a state of great commotion. Men had with them timbers, crosses, garments and other things. They were shouting 'The Sulṭān is calling for the destruction of the churches.'²⁶

Although many churches were wrecked, it became known later that it was not by order of the Sulṭān. The burning of the churches started a great fire which came close to al-Azhar. People were so terrified that those who were not helping the officials to pour water on the flames crowded into the mosque. Finally, when the mobs started looting, the Sulṭān al-Nāṣir put a stop to the orgy, nailing many of the offenders to the walls of the houses, while others were hung up by the wrists or had their hands amputated.

On occasions of this sort, when throngs of people stampeded into al-Azhar to seek refuge and to pray, the building was subjected to a great deal of wear and tear. It is not surprising, therefore, that during the year 1325 one of the Cairo officials²⁷ renovated the mosque.

Among the associates of al-Nāṣir there was a Mamlūk officer named Āqbughā, whose sister was one of the Sulṭān's wives. This "Amīr Āqbughā 'Abd-al-Wahīd built the college next to al-Jāmi' al-Azhar. Its site was where the house of the Amīr ibn-al-Hillī had once stood. The government *corvée* required the workmen to serve one day a week without pay. Each week all of the laborers of al-Qāhirah and Miṣr (Old Cairo) were collected to do their work and Āqbughā drew upon this government labor force for as many men as he needed, with his own Mamlūks to supervise them in a strict way. Nobody was ever seen who was more unjust than he was, for he not only exploited his workmen but even had them beaten." When the college was completed some time between the years 1333 and 1340, the "Judges and legal authorities used to meet there, but no one was in charge. The Sharīf al-

26. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. II, p. 218. Compare Taghrī-Birdī (*Nujūm*) Vol. IX, pp. 63-65.

27. The Inspector of Bazaars or *al-Muḥtasib*, named Najm-al-Dīn al-Is'irdī. See Maqrīzī (*Khīṭat*) Part IV, p. 53.

Muḥtasib offered gifts worth nearly six thousand silver coins on condition that he should direct the studies, but his request was not granted."²⁸

This college, which was called *al-Āqbughāwīyah*, was built to the left of the main entrance of al-Azhar, with windows opening into the mosque courtyard and a stone minaret²⁹ rising nearby. The principal room, like the one in the College of Ṭaybars, is beautified with fine marbles and a handsome prayer niche. As a number of smaller rooms were attached to the main one, there was ample space to teach both Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī studies.

The building of this college caused one change worth mentioning. According to the Qur'ān³⁰ and the practice of the Prophet, a Muslim is expected to wash his face, head, forearms, hands and feet with ritually pure water before engaging in prayer. As the Fātimids took it for granted that a worshipper would complete his ablutions before coming to a mosque, they did not provide a fountain for this ritual washing at al-Azhar. After their time, however, a fountain was built to the left of the main gateway. When Āqbughā constructed his college this fountain was removed, but in 1340 a high official³¹ provided a new one, a second one being added about 1408.

It is difficult to explain why al-Azhar became increasingly important, while the other colleges and mosques in Cairo were neglected. After the earthquake, when the Mosque of al-Ḥākim was rebuilt, the courses of study established there included the seven methods of reading the Qur'ān, all four codes of Sunnite jurisprudence, the traditions, grammar and some secular courses, perhaps logic and mathematics. As there were also special classes for orphans and a library, the Mosque of al-Ḥākim rivalled al-Azhar in importance. In 1325 when the famous traveller ibn-Baṭṭūṭah³² visited Cairo, he wrote in his journal about al-Nāṣir and his great hospital, as well as about the large number of Ṣūfī ascetics, supported by most generous charity. As he did not mention al-Azhar, the mosque could not have been especially important at that time. During the fifteenth century al-Azhar was only one of eighty-seven mosques and seventy-five colleges.³³ To

28. Translated from Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. II, pp. 455, 488. The *corvée* was called *al-'Amā'ir al-Sultānīyah*.

29. This is the oldest minaret still standing at al-Azhar.

30. Qur'ān, Sūrah V, verse 7.

31. Badr-al-Dīn Jankal ibn-al-Bābā, See Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 38.

32. See bibliography, Baṭṭūṭah.

33. Maqrīzī (*Khiṭat*) Part IV.

day all of these institutions have lost their importance except al-Azhar, the leading theological school of Islām and the most official place of worship in Egypt.

Undoubtedly one reason why al-Azhar gained its prestige was because it was regarded as a sacred shrine, as well as a place of refuge. An example has already been given of how the mobs rushed into al-Azhar to pray and find safety, when there was a serious fire in the neighborhood. Al-Maqrīzī offers another example, illustrating how the panic-stricken people turned to the mosque for help during an epidemic.

When the Sultān al-Nāṣir died in 1340, his power was so great that the Mamlūks appointed eight of his sons and four of his grandsons to serve as sultāns after him. It was during the reign of the seventh son, al-Ḥasan, that there occurred the terrible epidemic of the bubonic plague, known in Europe as the Black Death.³⁴ Even though the shaykhs of al-Azhar read the Traditions of the Prophet to invoke the mercy of Allāh, their efforts were in vain.

"There was an epidemic, the like of which had never before been known in Islām." "There died in al-Qāhirah and Miṣr between ten and fifteen thousand, or even as many as twenty thousand persons a day." "Most of the dead bodies were carried on wooden boards, ladders and doors. Then ditches were dug into which they were cast," thirty, forty, or even more being buried together in one trench.

"The epidemic was not the kind appearing in a single place, for it was universal throughout the regions of the earth: east and west, north and south, among all of the sons of Adam; even among other living things: great fishes of the sea, birds of the heavens and wild beasts of the earth." The plague started among the pagans of Central Asia. Then the wind carried it to the land of the Uzbaks, to Istanbūl, the Byzantines and Antioch. "It engulfed the regions of Qirmān and Qaysariyah with all of their mountains and provinces, annihilating their populations, their beasts of burden and their flocks. Fearing death the Kurds migrated, but no place did they find where death did not stalk. So back they journeyed to their homeland, where all of them met with death."

In China the disaster was more devastating than in India. It

34. The plague probably reached Cairo 1348. The Sultān al-Ḥasan built the great college, now used as a mosque, visited by tourists on their way to the Citadel.

caused fearful skin eruptions in Baghdād and swept through Syria and Palestine, ravaging Antioch and causing five hundred deaths a day at Aleppo. "In the town of Jīnīn only one old woman survived, fleeing away. Both in Ludd and al-Ramlah no one was left, the inns and other buildings being filled with corpses." In Ghazzah men dropped dead with their hands on their plows and six thieves perished as they were escaping with their booty.

Then the death reached the northern provinces of Egypt, spreading from one town to another, even to Bedouin tents. "In al-Qāhirah and Old Cairo it first attacked the women and children, then the tradesmen." The Sultān left the city for "The number of dead from the plague increased to three hundred persons a day, stricken by death, day and night. Then before the month of Rajab ended, the number surpassed a thousand a day."

As the plague became even more severe during the winter, the people gathered in the mosques for prayer and "The reading of al-Bukhārī continued at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar and other places for a number of days, while the people invoked Allāh the Exalted, being most attentive to prayer." "A man would sense that he had fever in his body. Then he would feel nauseated and spit blood, with death following. One after another the people of his household would go after him, until in the course of one or two nights all of them had perished. As every one left alive was sure that he would die of the disease, all of the people prepared themselves for the end, increasing their charities, making expiation and turning to worship."

"Nobody during this epidemic needed drinks or medicine, or even doctors, because death came so fast." As Upper Egypt suffered the same fate as the region around Cairo, agriculture and industry were crippled in the land as a whole. "It is said that the number of dead in one day reached twenty thousand and that there were counted in al-Qāhirah alone during the months of Sha'bān and Ramaḍān nine hundred thousand funerals."³⁵

Even if the statistics given by al-Maqrīzī are exaggerated, it must have been heart-rending to see women bereft of their husbands and children, men sunk in loneliness, orphans and terrified strangers entering the great courtyard and quiet sanctuary of al-Azhar, seeking peace for their souls and strength from Allāh.

The part played by al-Azhar was so greatly appreciated by the

35. Maqrīzī (*Sulūk*) Vol. II, pp. 772-797. Translation of selected passages.

Sultān, al-Ḥasan, that he encouraged one of his officers³⁶ to renovate numerous porticoes, as well as to rearrange the chests of persons lodging inside the mosque. There was such a very large number of these boxes that they cluttered the loggias and made nests for rats. The Amīr had the walls of the building white-washed, the pavements repaired and the chests placed in suitable positions.

At the south-east gate this same Amīr built a tank and drinking fountain,³⁷ over which he placed a room where orphans could learn to recite the Qur'ān. He also provided the orphans with a teacher and a manuscript of the Qur'ān—a generous gift as books were expensive before printing was discovered. In addition to these contributions the Amīr established classes in Ḥanafī jurisprudence and furnished a large copper cauldron for the mosque kitchen, so that food could be cooked every day for distribution to the indigent students.

These improvements at al-Azhar were made shortly before the descendants of al-Nāṣir and the Baḥrī Mamlūks lost control of the government, their places being taken by another line of slaves known as the Burjī Mamlūks.

The Burjī Mamlūks

The groups of Mamlūks who seized control of the state in 1382, with Barqūq as their Sultān, were for the most part Circassians purchased from Asia Minor and the Caucasus. They were called Burjī because their garrison was in the Citadel or *Burj* rather than on the island, where the Baḥrī Mamlūks had made their headquarters.

At the request of the Overseer of al-Azhar,³⁸ Barqūq issued a decree that the possessions of a student, who died without legal heirs, should be divided among his fellow students. During the first year of his reign the Sultān had this order inscribed on a stone, which is no longer in existence but was originally placed near the principal gateway of the mosque.

During this same year 1382 the great philosopher of history, ibn-Khaldūn, lectured at al-Azhar. In his famous work entitled

36. The Amīr Sa'd-al-Dīn Bashīr, called the Eunuch (*al-Ṭawāshī*), Master of the Wardrobe (*al-Jamdār*) and *al-Nāṣirī*. He renovated al-Azhar about 1359. See Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 53.

37. *sabil*.

38. *Al-Nāṣir*, Amīr Bahadūr, Commander of the Guard. See Maqrīzī (*Khiṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 53.

*al-Muqaddimah*³⁹ he recorded that after the time of Saladin the rulers built so many colleges and established such generous endowments, that many students came to Cairo from 'Irāq and North Africa. As Western Asia was devastated by Mongolian invasions during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Cairo took the place of Baghdād as the principal cultural center of the Arabs.

In 1397 or 1398 A.D. the minaret of al-Azhar either collapsed or was taken down, a new one being erected in its place.⁴⁰ It was also during the reign of Barqūq that the ascetics were so greatly encouraged that they directly influenced al-Azhar, where mysticism and orthodox doctrines were becoming closely bound together.

The able Mamlūk Sultān named al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, who ruled from 1412 to 1421, appointed some of his personal friends to administer al-Azhar. One of them was his chamberlain, the Amīr Sūdūn, and another was a jewel merchant, famous for the cane with which he enforced discipline.⁴¹

During the year 1415 the brick minaret of al-Azhar was found to be leaning.⁴² It was therefore taken down and replaced by a stone one, while the nearby north gateway was also being reconstructed with stone. About the same time a cistern covered by a dome was constructed to provide drinking water for the poor and the experiment was made of planting four trees in the open courtyard. Unfortunately none of them survived.

In describing this period the historian al-Maqrīzī wrote about al-Azhar that

The mosque continued to flourish with the reading of the Qur'ān and the studies based upon it and its correct diction, together with courses in sciences like jurisprudence, the traditions, commentary and grammar. There were also preaching sessions and *dhikr* circles,⁴³ so that if a person entered the mosque he found there the cheer of Allāh, with a tranquility and spiritual calm not to be found elsewhere.

The lords of wealth sought out this mosque with different kinds of pious gifts such as gold, silver and money, in order

39. Khaldūn (*Quatremère*) Part II, p. 384; (*Rosenthal*) Vol. II, p. 435.

40. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 38. This was not the minaret of Āqbughā.

41. See 'Inān (1942) pp. 130, 131; Tritton (*Muslim Educ.*) p. 101.

42. The stone was taken from the college of al-Ashraf Khalīl and the work supervised by the Amīr Tāj-al-Dīn al-Shawbakī, the Wālī and Muhtasib. See Maqrīzī (*Khitat*) Part IV, p. 54; Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 38. Khaffājī, Vol. I, p. 67.

43. Dervish séances.

to help the students to serve Allāh the Exalted. Every little while various kinds of food, such as bread and sweets, were provided, especially during times of pilgrimage.

The number of indigent persons who continued to live in this mosque reached 750 at this time. They were Persians, Negroes, inhabitants of the Egyptian Rif and North Africans. Each national group had its own residential unit⁴⁴ known by its name.

Many persons, moreover, slept at al-Azhar: shopkeepers, lawyers, soldiers and others. Some sought a blessing by living there. Others could not find lodgings elsewhere. Still others hoped to find rest by sleeping there, both in the summer nights and during the month of Ramaḍān. Thus the open court and most of the loggias were crowded.

Then when it was the night of Sunday the eleventh of *Jumādā al-Ākhirah* the Amīr Sūdūb⁴⁵ closed the mosque, at the end of the later afternoon prayer during the summer-time, and seizing a group of men he had them flogged inside the mosque building. A crowd of henchmen, young chaps, toughs and pillage seekers from the populace were with him. They brought a variety of misfortunes to the men in the mosque, as they assailed them for plunder, seized their bedding and headcloths, searched their belongings and looted all of the gold and silver articles, which were in safe keeping. They also took the black cloth from the pulpit, with two pieces of embellished handwork. The total value of these articles was fifteen thousand silver coins, according to what has been reported to me. But Allāh punished the Amīr Sūdūb, for the Sultān arrested him during the month of Ramaḍān, imprisoning him at Damascus.⁴⁶

This quotation from al-Maqrīzī implies that al-Azhar had not only become an important congregational mosque and educational center, but also a shrine for the pious, a hostel for pilgrims, a refuge for the poor and a gathering place for ascetics.

In 1429 the Sultān Barsbāy appointed a eunuch named Jawhar al-Qunuqbāyī to serve as his treasurer. This officer built a small college adjoining the north-east wall of al-Azhar, with a window

44. Each unit was a *riwāq*. The 750 in these units were almost certainly students.

45. Judge and Chief Chamberlain, the name may be confused with that of Amīr Sūdūn, the Chamberlain mentioned above. See Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ*) Vol. IV, p. 54.

46. Translated from Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ*) Part IV, pp. 54, 55, with the order of the paragraphs changed.

opening into the sanctuary and his own tomb in a small adjacent room. In spite of its miniature size this building, which is called *al-Jawharīyah*, is a beautiful example of Mamlūk architecture and workmanship.

During the reigns of Barsbāy and his immediate successors, there were outbreaks of the plague and other calamities, which drove the people to al-Azhar for refuge and prayer. In 1446 the mosque was once more repaired, the columns being polished and the walls near the prayer niche painted.⁴⁷ Additional endowments were also given to support classes in jurisprudence.

In 1468 a capable ruler named Qā'it-Bāy became the Sultān. He had been purchased by Barsbāy for fifty gold coins when he was about twenty years old. He was then acquired by Jaqmaq, who set him free, giving him a horse of his own. After serving Jaqmaq for a time he was given the title of *amīr*, being placed over ten Mamlūk cavalrymen. Nine years later he became an officer of the first grade, soon afterward being placed in charge of a thousand armed men. In the course of time he was promoted first to become Commander of the Guard, then the Commander-in-Chief⁴⁸ and finally in 1468, at the age of fifty, the Sultān. As an officer he lived near the sheep market, but when he became the ruler he moved to the Citadel. An escort of eunuchs and important ladies accompanied his wife, the Princess Fāṭimah, to her new home. Qā'it-Bāy died in 1495, three years after Columbus discovered America. Although he was an able ruler, who defended his country against Ottoman invasions, the later years of his reign were saddened by incessant warfare, as well as by another epidemic of the plague.

Qā'it-Bāy was fond of polo and hunting, but his hobby seems to have been architecture. In Alexandria he built a castle on the foundations of the old Pharos, which had finally become a ruin.⁴⁹ In Cairo his famous mosque-tomb, with adjoining cells for Ṣūfis, is still one of the best known among the many monuments of the city. He also did a great deal to improve al-Azhar.

During the winter of 1469 he erected a handsome gateway at the end of the passage between the colleges of Ṭaybars and Āqbughā. Then during the plague epidemic of 1477 he sought the favor of Allāh by undertaking even more important improve-

47. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 39.

48. *Atabāk al-'Asākīr*.

49. Iyās (*Hist. Mamlouks*) pp. 147, 172.

ments. Muḥammad ibn-Iyās tells that one day the Sultān rode his horse to al-Azhar, accompanied by a number of high officials. When he reached the mosque he was joined by a group of judges, who had already procured a legal decision, authorizing changes to be made. Qā'it-Bāy gave orders for the removal of ramshackle constructions from the roof and appropriated ten thousand gold coins for a building program. At the same time he had a thousand gold coins distributed among the indigent persons living in the mosque. In spite, however, of the Sultān's generosity, the plague epidemic continued unabated.⁵⁰

Three panels of wood in the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo record this building program. It consisted in a thorough renovation of the mosque building as a whole, the erecting of a new minaret to the right of the principal gateway, the providing of two new residential units for the students and the installation of screens, to separate the main sanctuary from the side colonnades.⁵¹ The ramshackle rooms removed from the roof were probably lavatories and latrines, as new ones were provided on the ground floor, together with a drinking fountain, which may have had a school room over it.

Qā'it-Bāy appointed as superintendent of this work the son⁵² of the slave dealer, who years before had sold him to a high official for fifty gold coins. This superintendent must have been a wealthy man, as he contributed fifteen thousand gold coins of his own to help pay for the work, which was completed in 1494 A.D.

A number of records make it clear that Qā'it-Bāy was more intimately connected with al-Azhar than with the other mosques of the city. It was rumored, for instance, that he used to go to al-Azhar in disguise, so as to attend prayers and question the people about the actions of his government. When the Sultān fell sick at Damascus in 1477, the Traditions of al-Bukhārī were read in the presence of the judges of the four codes of law. Robes of honor and financial stipends were also given out to the scholars at al-Azhar. When certain soldiers mutinied, some of them tried to escape, while other sought shelter at al-Azhar. Qā'it-Bāy punished the ones who attempted to run away by scourging and amputation of the hands, while he showed mercy to those in the

50. Iyās (*Hist. Mamlouks*) p. 141; (872-928) Vol. III, p. 120, 299.

51. Mubārak, Part IV, p. 12; Rajab, p. 11; Khaffāji, Vol. I, p. 68. A door leading to the present lavatory bears the name of Qā'it-Bāy. The residential units became *Riwāq al-Shawwām* and *Riwāq al-Maghāribah*.

52. al-Khuwājā Muṣṭafā ibn-Maḥmūd ibn-Rustum al-Rūmī.

mosque, sending them away from Cairo without subjecting them to torture.⁵³

Although most of the students at al-Azhar were of high school and college age, there were also mature scholars interested in research. Thus during the last half of the fourteenth century a well known authority⁵⁴ kept alive an interest in philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences. In spite of the fact that one professor was so popular that his circle of students stretched around seventeen columns,⁵⁵ it was not unusual for an inexperienced teacher to be a complete failure.

Many boys began life in the provinces, but went to Cairo for advanced study. In an age when morality was at a low ebb, it was inevitable that some of these ambitious country boys should turn out to be imposters. One young shaykh of al-Azhar, for instance, tried to pose as an authority by criticising a certain legal book, saying that a child could write a book like that. As this shaykh was leaving the mosque, a soldier asked him to read the book to him. When the shaykh objected the soldier said, "You wear a big turban so that the people will think you're an authority on the law." Without further comment the soldier knocked him down and gave him a beating.⁵⁶

This shaykh, however, was an exception. The majority of the teachers were sincere scholars with ascetic habits. It was their learning and consecration which made the old mosque so respected that people would curse a man by saying, "May God cut him off from al-Azhar!"⁵⁷

After Qā'it-Bāy died and a number of officers proved to be incapable of ruling the realm, an able Mamlūk named Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī became the Sultān. He might have been a very successful ruler, if it had not been for an event which occurred three years before he rose to power. In 1497 Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, discovering a new trade route to India. Before long the trade between Europe and the East went around the Cape, so that Egypt lost her revenues from loading charges and customs dues. As an inevitable result of the depression resulting from these losses, the Sultān was unable to pay

53. Iyās (*Hist. Mamlouks*) pp. 138, 153; (872-928) Vol. III, pp. 117, 133, 266.

54. Qunbur ibn-'Abd-Allāh al-Sharwānī, who died about 1399; see Suyūṭī, Part 1, p. 236.

55. *ibid*; Part I, p. 191.

56. *Shā'rānī*, p. 51.

57. Tritton (*Muslim Educ.*) p. 125.

his Mamlūk officers and Bedouin allies enough to satisfy them, so that the morale of the army collapsed.

The Portuguese not only wrecked the Egypt trade, but also invaded the Red Sea. Between the years 1502 and 1506 al-Ghawrī tried to drive them off, but without success. In spite, however, of defeat abroad and depression at home, the Sultān undertook public works of considerable importance. Today he is remembered because he built a handsome minaret in the right hand corner of the court of al-Azhar. It is the highest minaret in the mosque and easy to recognize because it is double headed. It is also possible that al-Ghawrī constructed the dome⁵⁸ in front of the prayer niche.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century there were three powerful monarchs in the Middle East. In the first place, there was the Sultān al-Ghawrī ruling over Egypt, Palestine and Syria. Then there was the Shāh Ismā'il in Persia, a champion of the Shī'ite branch of Islām. Last but not least, there was the Ottoman Sultān Salīm at Constantinople, the ruler of Asia Minor and parts of the Balkans.

In 1501 the Ottoman Sultān defeated the Persian Shāh. Fifteen years later he invaded Syria. It was, therefore, in 1516 that the last great ruler of the Mamlūks mobilized an army to defend his country. It must have been an impressive sight to witness the Sultān al-Ghawrī himself leading ten thousand troops, accompanied by his great officers. The Mamlūk horsemen with their Arab stallions and brilliant trappings, the Bedouin allies on their camels, the drummers, fifers and standard bearers all formed a magnificent pageant. Money chests on camels were guarded by treasury clerks, ox carts lumbered along bearing cannon and ammunition, a hundred camels carried the armory equipment, with elephants, camels and mules to transport supplies and a host of blacksmiths, builders, carpenters and camp followers in the rear.⁵⁹

This great army was a vain show. Reinforced by the troops in Syria, it met the Ottomans at Marj Dābīq, a day's journey north of Aleppo. Because he was seventy-eight years old, the Sultān al-Ghawrī was unable to stand the strain of battle and dropped dead, just when his leadership was most needed. At least

58. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, pp. 39, 40. The pendentives of the dome are like those in a mausoleum of the same period.

59. Précis, Vol. III, pp. 1-10. Stripling, pp. 44-56. Iyās (*Account*).

one general deserted and the morale of the troops collapsed. The Ottomans won a great victory and pressed on through Syria to invade Egypt.

When Tūmān-Bāy al-Ashraf was chosen to be al-Ghawrī's successor, he was defeated by the Ottomans, first at al-Ḥajh and later near the Pyramids. The Turkish authorities hanged him like a common criminal at the south gate of al-Qāhirah, making it clear to the populace that Egypt had become an Ottoman province.

The fall of the Mamlūks was not a tragedy for al-Azhar as the collapse of the Fāṭimids had been in former times. In fact it was in the Ottoman period that al-Azhar gained the pre-eminence which has made it so famous throughout the Muslim world.

Egypt Under Ottoman Rule

- 1517 The Ottoman Salīm conquered Egypt.
- 1520-1566 Sulaymān the Magnificent, Sultān of the Ottomans.
 Reorganization of the Government: the dīwāns
 established.
- 1690 Death of the first Rector of al-Azhar.
- 1708 Quarrel over the appointment of the Rector.
- 1717 ‘Uthmān Katkhudā started improvements at al-Azhar.
- 1751-1752 ‘Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā made extensive additions
 to al-Azhar.
- 1769-1773 ‘Alī Bāy al-Kabīr made Egypt independent of Turkey.
- 1773 Abū-al-Dhahab restored Ottoman suzerainty.
- 1775-1798 Ibrāhīm and Murād controlled the internal affairs of
 Egypt.
- 1798 Invasion of Napoleon Bonaparte.

CHAPTER IV

Al-Azhar During The Ottoman Period

Ottoman Suzerainty

WHEN the Ottoman army entered Cairo, ten thousand people were killed and many buildings were burned. Four thousand Circassian Mamlūks were beheaded, their bodies being thrown into the river, while their heads were hung up on the Middle Island for all to see. Although the Turkish troops killed persons who opposed them, they pardoned the fugitives whom they found at al-Azhar, because of the sanctity of the mosque.¹

By robbing the great houses, the Ottomans collected masses of booty to send to Turkey. They also seized a hundred scholars and piles of books, but fortunately did not interfere with the endowments² of the mosques and colleges. "About 1800 persons: judges, important noblemen, members of the 'ulamā', rich and poor, various merchants of Khān Khalīl and other bazaars, legal authorities, high officials, women and children, scholars and laborers, Christians and Treasury clerks and many artisans"³ were led off to Istanbul.

The Sultān Salīm spent eight months in Egypt, during which time he attended some of the Friday services at al-Azhar, giving the mosque money and other benefits. In fact, al-Azhar was so greatly favored by the Turkish conquerors that its faculty and library may have escaped the treatment given to less fortunate institutions.

Even after Salīm returned to Istanbul, al-Azhar continued to be honored. In 1518 and 1519, when there were pious readings in a few of the most sacred shrines of Cairo, al-Azhar was chosen to be one of them. A poem written in 1520 singled out al-Azhar as a leading center of learning and during the following year the Ottoman official in charge of Egypt attended a service at the mosque. When he fell sick this same officer set free numerous

1. Iyās (872-928) Vol. V and (*Ottoman Conquest*) pp. 115-117.

2. *Al-awqāf*.

3. Précis, Vol. III, p. 15.

slaves, distributing at the same time wheat and a thousand silver coins to the students of al-Azhar and other schools.

During centuries of Ottoman rule the history of Egypt⁴ was filled with events of such a local and unimportant nature, that, instead of dealing with the period in detail, only a few of its characteristics will be discussed in a general way.

In 1520 Sulaymān the Magnificent succeeded Salīm, proving to be one of the greatest of the Ottoman sultāns. As the officers whom he at first sent to Egypt failed to administer the country in a satisfactory way, he finally sent his brother-in-law, the Grand Vizier Ibrāhīm, to establish order. Although Ibrāhīm was obliged to fight a war with the Portuguese in the Red Sea, he found time to revise the land registers and to issue a new civil code for the reorganization of the Egyptian government.

Egypt was one of the thirty administrative districts of the Ottoman Empire, subject to the suzerainty of the Sultān of Istanbul, who was an absolute despot, except as he was expected to respect the laws of Islām. As his realm was a vast one, the Sultān delegated a great deal of the routine business to the officials who served him and, at the same time, granted a large degree of autonomy to the subject peoples of his empire. "The Turks made no attempt to assimilate the non-Turkish elements in their Empire."⁵ In Egypt they tried to win the loyalty of the people by upholding the (*Sharī'ah*) law and showing favor to the Muslim scholars and ascetics. As the Nile Valley was far removed from Turkey, the Ottomans were guided by three other principles for administration in Egypt.

In the first place, the Ottoman viceroy, or *pasha*, was given a force of Janissaries⁶ and required to supply Istanbul with an annual tribute, which included not only money but also rice, sugar, vegetables, perfumes, drugs, spices, supplies for the arsenal and other goods from Egypt.

In the second place, as they feared that their viceroy in a province as rich and isolated as Egypt might be tempted to declare his independence, the Ottomans appointed their *pashas* year by year, depriving them of the fiefs normally granted to

4. For the history of this period see the bibliography, Iyās and Jabartī. *Précis*, Vol. III, pp. 379-386 gives a list of the Ottoman pashas.

5. Zeine, p. 13.

6. Slave soldiers and government servants, conscripted from the Christian communities of Europe. Salīm assigned six corps of Janissaries to Cairo under an *āghā*; Sulaymān added a seventh.

officials of their rank. Although the viceroy was treated with becoming pomp, he was not allowed to attend the meetings of the two advisory councils established at Cairo, but was obliged to be represented by his deputy, the *katkhudā* or *kāhyā*. These councils are usually referred to as the *Greater* and *Lesser Diwāns*. Their members not only included the leading administrative officials and Mamlūk amīrs, but also the heads of the four codes of law and a number of important shaykhs. As some of these legal and religious authorities were sure to be attached to al-Azhar, it gave the institution the power to influence political affairs.

A third principle adopted by the Ottomans was granting permission for the Mamlūks to handle local affairs, much as they had been doing before the Turkish invasion. There were twenty-four great Mamlūk amīrs, possessing the right to use drums and standards. Some of them served as officials in the central government, while normally a dozen of them were appointed as provincial governors, or *sanjāq-bāys*. Because they had personal fiefs, with troops and administrative assistants to serve them, their system continued to be a feudal one. In the course of time two of their number assumed special importance as the *Shaykh al-Balad* and *Amīr al-Hajj*. Thus in spite of the Ottoman conquest al-Azhar was still subject to the control of the local Mamlūk officials, required to render the same services during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which it had rendered during the period of the Crusades and the Mongolian invasions.

The first period of Ottoman rule was marked by violence and calamity, accompanied by quarrels among the Mamlūk officers, but the latter part of the seventeenth century seems to have been a time of prosperity. Cairo was so large that a herald needed two days to run around the city. Sometimes there were a thousand river boats tied up to the wharves at Būlāq and rich merchants vied with the high officials in maintaining luxurious homes.

A traveller who visited Egypt in 1686 wrote that the

Grand Cairo, call'd by the Turks Alcair, is at present one of the greatest Cities in the Universe, being inclos'd with walls of about Ten Leagues in circuit, and having Seven Gates, Twenty-four thousand Streets, and Twenty-two thousand Mosques, or Mohamitan Churches. We were charmed with the prospect of this city when we view'd it from an Eminence, the Houses being all flat at the top, the Mosques numerous and stately, and the Gardens which take

up a considerable part of the Inclosure, extremely agreeable to the Eye. The streets 'tis true are narrow and filthy, the Houses of the Common People mean and for the most part of wood, though the mosques are well-built, as are likewise the Houses of the better sort, the Rooms being all vaulted (by reason of the excessive heat of the Sun), gilt, painted and beautiful with all sorts of rich ornaments.⁷

We can only understand the growth of al-Azhar during the Ottoman period if we realize that, in spite of the injustice of the Mamlūk officials, there was a fair degree of prosperity.

Scholarship during the Ottoman Regime

When Léon l'Africain went to Egypt during the sixteenth century, he wrote that there was an "Infinity of Colleges of fine construction and marvellous grandeur in all of the quarters of Cairo."⁸ Although they themselves spoke Turkish, the officials encouraged these schools, because of their respect for Islām and their need for experts to administer their judicial system.

The Ottomans appointed a Turkish chief justice, who depended upon Egyptian assistants for the direction of the courts. Thus there was an Arabic speaking Egyptian to preside over the cases connected with each of the four codes of Sunnite law, with assistants to help, not only in Cairo but also in the provinces. As there was also a *muftī* in each central district, to give authoritative legal interpretations, the old Islamic sciences continued to be all important for the conduct of the (*Shari'ah*) law. As Professor Zeine has clearly explained the

Backbone of Ottoman government—the Muslim Sacred Shari'ah—could not be maintained without a knowledge of the Arabic language. After all, the Qur'ān and all other sources of Muslim Jurisprudence were all in Arabic. The University of al-Azhar in Cairo and the Sunni religious schools of Damascus, Tripoli and Aleppo trained a large number of 'Ulamas, Qadis and Muftis well versed in Muslim law and Jurisprudence. They were appointed to various religious courts throughout the Empire and thus occupied positions of great influence and importance.⁹

7. Quoted from "The Egyptians and the Arabs as Seen by the English Two Centuries Ago" by Bothaina Abdal-Hamid Mohamed, page 5. (Anglo-Eg. Bookshop, Cairo, 1957). The 22,000 mosques must include roadside places for prayer.

8. Arminjon, p. 37.

9. Zeine, p. 14.

These legal authorities, together with the mosque leaders, preachers and teachers, formed the corps of learned men of the period, just as they had done in former times. They were the 'ulamā', which is the plural form of the Arabic word 'ālim or *knowing*. The pre-eminent position attained by al-Azhar during the Ottoman period was due largely to the fact that its professors and graduates were leading members of this group both in Cairo and the provinces. Faculty appointments, maintenance of endowments, care of honorariums, supervision of courses and finding employment for the graduates of the colleges more and more came to depend upon the shaykhs of al-Azhar.¹⁰

As the legal and religious authorities were the true leaders of the Egyptian populace, whenever they championed the rights of the exploited peasants and artisans, even the Mamlūks were obliged to listen to them. Thus it was said about one of the worst of the officers, "He was cruel and unjust, but respected the 'Ulamā', listened to their intercession and inclined to Islām."¹¹

The following example explains how the experts could defend the rights of the common people by means of legal interpretation. When taxation became exorbitant many peasant boys either joined the Bedouin or came to Cairo, to enjoy the rations granted to students. As the tax collectors claimed that it was illegal for the boys to allow their farms to become unproductive, the matter was referred to the 'ulamā'. Inasmuch as the peasants did not own their lands, but rented them or else worked on them as share-croppers and hired laborers, the following decision was rendered. "The land of Egypt is not tribute-land; there is therefore no claim against the cultivator if he leaves it." "If consequently any cultivator abandons his cultivation and comes to dwell in Cairo, there is no claim against him, and the action of the oppressors in subjecting him to compulsion is illegal, especially if he wishes to engage in study of the Qur'ān and learning like the students at the mosque of al-Azhar."¹²

In spite of their learning and desire for social justice, the scholars were inclined to be imitative rather than creative, writing expositions of ancient works instead of presenting new ideas of their own. Several incidents illustrate how much the shaykhs of this period feared all kinds of innovation. During the early years of the sixteenth century ascetics from Southern Arabia brought

10. Gibb (*Isl. Soc.*) Vol. I, Part II, p. 99.

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 112, note.

12. *ibid.*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 261, note.

coffee to al-Azhar, where they used it to keep themselves awake during night time devotions. Instead of appreciating the value of coffee, the shaykhs of the mosque condemned it as something harmful.¹³

Not long afterward tobacco found its way to Cairo. As the shaykhs condemned this innovation also, "The Police marched up and down at least three times a day and if a smoker was caught, he had to eat his pipebowl."¹⁴

Then during the year 1711 a reformer known as *Wā'iz al-Rūm*¹⁵ preached at the Mosque of al-Mu'ayyad, attracting huge crowds. He denounced the well established custom of honoring the tombs of holy men, and prevented the people from hanging pieces of cloth and votive offerings on the southern gate of the city, or *Bāb Zuwaylah*.

Several of the leading shaykhs of al-Azhar opposed the reformer and made such a strong appeal to the government to stop his preaching that, in spite of the protests of the public, the Pasha forbade *Wā'iz al-Rūm* to address the people of Cairo.

This conservative state of mind did not interfere with practical improvements at al-Azhar. During the last decade of the sixteenth century the authorities repaired the mosque building and increased the amount of food distributed to students and other indigent persons. Then some time between 1605 and 1607 Ḥasan Pasha built *Maqām al-Sādah al-Ḥanafīyah* with fine materials and excellent workmanship.

Shaykh al-Azhar

It was probably during the end of the seventeenth century that the authorities established the position of *Shaykh al-Azhar*.¹⁶ The records which have been preserved cite Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abd-Allāh al-Khurashī as the first candidate to fill the position. Before his time the head of the mosque was not necessarily a scholar, but after the position of *Shaykh al-Azhar* had been instituted, al-Azhar was always presided over by a leading member of the 'ulamā'.

13. Hitti (*Arabs*) p. 335, note 6. For the *fatwā* which finally made coffee legal, Ṭawīl, p. 115.

14. Lane-Poole (*Story of Cairo*) p. 297.

15. Sharqāwī, Part I, pp. 95-99. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Nafrāwī was the leading member of al-Azhar, opposing the preacher.

16. In Fātimid times the head of al-Azhar was *al-Mushrif* and in Mamlūk times *al-Nāzir*; in English the title is "Rector." For a list of the Rectors see the table on p. 193.

One authority¹⁷ has suggested that this new position may have been created at the time of Sulaymān the Magnificent, as there is an old record that when the Pasha was holding a meeting in the middle of the seventeenth century, it was attended by the Shaykh al-Azhar. It has also been suggested that Ibrāhīm ibn-Muḥammad al-Barmāwī, who died in 1694, was Shaykh al-Azhar before the time of al-Khurashī, but there are no accurate records to prove the validity of such suggestions.

When Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khurashī died in 1689 or 1690, the saintly Mālikī scholar, Muḥammad al-Nashartī, was unanimously recognized as his successor. Some eighteen years later, however, there was a serious quarrel in connection with the choosing of a Rector to follow al-Nashartī. Two opposing parties were formed among the influential people of the city and the hot-headed students of al-Azhar. One faction supported Shaykh Aḥmad al-Nafrāwī, while the other championed Shaykh ‘Abd-al-Bāqī al-Qalīnī.¹⁸ First the students of the College of Āqbughā became aggressive and then a band of the Nafrāwī party came with guns, causing a serious fracas. After lamps and student chests had been broken, many persons injured and ten killed, the troops arrived to clear the students from the mosque. Numerous offenders were put in prison, and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Nafrāwī was confined to his house, Shaykh ‘Abd-al-Bāqī al-Qalīnī being installed as the Rector.

Two successors of al-Qalīnī were exceptional because of their wealth. Shaykh Muḥammad Shanan was the richest man of his time, the possessor of gold, silver, land and investments. His family built a great house beside the Nile at Būlāq, with Mam-lūks to guard it and slaves to do the household work. Shaykh ‘Abd-Allāh al-Shubrāwī was also a rich man, who built a palatial residence by the park of Ezbekiya.¹⁹

In contrast to these wealthy rectors there was a teacher at al-Azhar, who lived near Būlāq and went to his classes on a donkey, a distance of about two miles and a half each way. When his donkey died he was too poor to buy a new one, so that he had to go to classes on foot.²⁰

17. ‘Inān (1942) pp. 135-141.

18. Jabartī, Part I, pp. 208, 209; (*Merveilles*) Tome I, p. 83; Tome II, pp. 155-158.

19. *Ibid.*, Part I, p. 73; (*Merveilles*) Tome I, p. 178. The name of the park should probably be written al-Uzbakiyah.

20. Sharqāwī, Part II, p. 137.

This poor teacher rather than the rich rectors was a typical representative of the scholars, as most of the shaykhs lived in an ascetic way, devoting themselves to their studies and religious exercises. Many of them were influenced by the Ṣūfī movement, which affected al-Azhar in such an important way that something must be added to what has already been said about it.

Influence of the Ṣūfī Movement

During a period of cruelty, poverty and constant epidemic, men sought happiness in the hereafter rather than on earth. Many of the ascetics gave up the pleasures of this world for those of heaven, while others tried to enjoy immediate contact with God by means of religious study, contemplation and ecstasy. All of them believed in enduring the tyranny of their times with obedience to persons in power and trust in Allāh. As they encouraged the people to be subservient and fatalistic, they won the favor and generosity of their rulers.²¹

During the Ottoman period a Ṣūfī was sure to belong to a fraternity, which had its own way²² of seeking salvation, with a shaykh in charge of the order. Many peasants and artisans were affiliated with the fraternities, while the more ardent devotees lived in the dervisheries. Their system included the séance, which in Arab lands usually consisted of music, prayer and intoning, followed by a repetition of the name of Allāh with increasing rapidity, withholding of the breath and swaying of the body, so as to produce a state of abstraction.²³ It is probable that one reason why al-Azhar became so popular was because the shaykhs permitted this form of worship, even though they condemned certain abuses of the Ṣūfī movement.

Many a Ṣūfī sought salvation by means of mysticism. Thus he would withdraw to a cell or hermit's cave for fasting, prayer and contemplation. If he beheld visions and experienced ecstatic union with Allāh, the common people were sure to believe that he had received special forms of grace, which made him a saint or companion of Allāh. Not only the Prophet, abū-Bakr and some of the other Companions of Muḥammad were regarded as holy, but also local leaders and men of saintly character.²⁴

21. For the Ṣūfī movement in Egypt, see Ṭawīl.

22. *al-tarīqah*.

23. The system was *al-Taṣawwuf* and the séance a *dhikr*.

24. The cell was *al-khilwah*, ecstasy *al-fanā'*, the forms of grace *al-karāmāt* and the saint *walī Allāh*. The principal Egyptian saints were Aḥmad al-Badawī and Ibrāhīm al-Dassūqī.

Dr. Tawfiq al-Ṭawīl speaks of a number of saints who were closely connected with al-Azhar. "Muḥammad al-Munayyar, who died in 931 (1525 A.D.) used to seek seclusion every year during Ramaḍān at al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, where the legal authorities daily gathered about him to read one Quranic passage during the day time and another at night." Another Ṣūfī spent his time near the gateway of al-Azhar, where the leading 'ulamā' treated him with great respect, believing in his sainthood. Al-Ḥifnāwī and other shaykhs welcomed these mystics to the mosque. It was said about one of them that "He visited al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, where the 'ulamā' and instructors asked him to teach, seeking his blessing." He described his welcome by saying "All of the students and persons living there honored us, taking our hand and calling for intercession with abundance of faith. We were so overcome by this aura of reverence that we were moved to tears, while they also wept and we called down blessings upon them until we departed from the mosque."²⁵

Some of the shaykhs of al-Azhar were themselves regarded as holy men with the power to perform miracles. Thus al-Jabartī records that a shaykh named Muḥammad al-Qilaynī al-Azhari

Was a man possessing honorable qualities and virtues, among which was his ability to spend money derived from invisible sources. Although he had no income, property or employment, never receiving anything from anyone, he dispensed sums not at all in keeping with poverty. If he walked through the bazaars the poor clung to him, while he gave them gold and silver, and whenever he entered a bath he paid the fee for all who were present.²⁶

Superstition of this sort inevitably produced abuses, which the shaykhs of al-Azhar condemned by legal decisions²⁷ and critical writings. Many of the Ṣūfis were ascetics, prone to objectionable practices. Swooning, rhapsody, loud wailing and weeping, tearing of turbans, stripping off clothing, beating of drums, playing flutes and carrying banners, were banned by conservative members of the 'ulamā'. Lunatics also caused strange situations, because the ascetics and the common people believed that an insane person had unusual powers, deserving special respect.

The most objectionable abuses, however, were not so much due to the superstition of the people, as to the corruption of the

25. Ṭawīl, pp. 180-182.

26. Jabartī, Part I, p. 189; (*Merveilles*) Tome II, p. 117.

27. An expert legal decision; a *fatwā*.

masters of the fraternities. There were four²⁸ especially important orders in Egypt, but ambitious Ṣūfīs broke away from them, forming so many branches and new orders of their own, that even today there are forty-five Dervish fraternities in the country as a whole.

The devotees gave the master of their order such complete control, that he could discipline a member guilty of neglecting his duty by the bastinado or by lashing with straps. The heads of the fraternities enjoyed such devotion from their followers and so many favors from the rulers, that "The regime of the faqīrs was more firmly established, greater in influence and stronger politically than the rule of the Ottomans, especially during the last half of the Ottoman period."²⁹

The shaykhs of al-Azhar condemned the jealousy and false ambition of the leaders, as well as the superstitious practices of the members of the Dervish orders. They also objected to the Ṣūfī tendency to interpret the Qur'ān so as to uphold certain tenets not strictly in line with orthodox theology. On the other hand, the illustrations already given explain how much they respected true sainthood, with its renouncement of worldly pleasures and pious seeking after God. The shaykhs also profited by the Ṣūfī movement, because the ascetics greatly encouraged religious study as a means of drawing closer to Allāh. Many young Ṣūfīs studied at al-Azhar, some of them becoming teachers who infused the academic work of the mosque with their ideas. Thus, although this blending of asceticism, mysticism and pious scholarship encouraged superstition and fatalism at the expense of philosophy and science, it helped to vitalize the religion of the shaykhs, creating an atmosphere of self-denial and spiritual sincerity.

Final Years of Ottoman Rule

During the year 1715 a wealthy officer named 'Uthmān Katkhudā³⁰ started to make three additions to al-Azhar. He enlarged the *Riwāq al-Atrāk*, which was the residential unit for Turkish students, first established by Qā'it-Bāy, constructed the *Riwāq al-Sulaymāniyah* to provide quarters for the students

28. The orders were those of Aḥmad al-Rifā'i, 'Abd-al-Qādir al-Jilānī, Aḥmad al-Badawī and Ibrāhīm al-Dassūqī.

29. Tawīl, p. 109. Faqīrs are, in Arabic, *al-fuqarā'*.

30. Amīr 'Uthmān Katkhudā al-Jawīsh al-Qāzdughlī; see Jabartī, Part I, p. 168; (*Merveilles*) Tome II, p. 61; Mubārak, Part II, p. 91; Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 40.

from Khurāsān and Afghanistān and, finally, built a school for blind boys near the north-east wall of the mosque enclosure. It was known as *Zāwīyat al-'Umyān*³¹ and had washing facilities in the basement, a classroom with four columns and a prayer niche on the ground floor, and three living rooms upstairs. Although 'Uthmān died in 1736, his interest in al-Azhar was shared by his son, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān.

This Amir 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā³² was in Arabia from 1742 to 1748, safeguarding the pilgrimage. Then he returned to Cairo, where he became the deputy of the Turkish Pasha and used his large income for pious purposes. As he was said to have built eighteen mosques in Egypt and Arabia, he was called the "Master of Good Deeds and Buildings."³³ He became so popular that he aroused the jealousy of a Mamlūk official named 'Alī Bāy al-Kabīr,³⁴ the famous rebel who made Egypt independent between the years 1769 and 1773. In order to get rid of his rival, 'Alī Bāy sent 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā back to Arabia, where he remained until 1776. He died soon after his return to Cairo and was buried in the tomb which he built for himself at al-Azhar.

'Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā's most important undertaking was the enlargement of al-Azhar, which was started and perhaps completed before he was sent back to Arabia as an exile. His building program included the following repairs and additions.³⁵ He doubled the area of the sanctuary by building a large new loggia behind it. This new construction has a handsome wooden roof, supported by fifty columns, with a high pulpit to the right of a prayer niche. A rear entrance called *Bāb Shurbah* was made to the left of the prayer niche, a new minaret being erected alongside. Back of this gateway the kitchen and bakery were improved, so that with a generous assignment of money it was possible to give cracked wheat to the students twice a week, as well as to distribute rice, cooking fat and water buffalo meat to the poor during Ramaḍān.³⁶

31. It was outside of the mosque compound and is no longer in existence.

32. Jabartī, Part II, p. 5, 6; (*Merveilles*) Tome III, pp. 238-246.

33. *Sāhib al-Khayrāt wa'l-'Amā'ir*.

34. 'Alī Bāy was the Shaykh al-Balad, who during the Turkish-Russian War joined with al-Zāhir in Palestine to rebel. His general Muḥammad abū-al-Dhahab turned against him and restored the Ottoman suzerainty.

35. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 40. Mubārak, Part IV, p. 16. Heyworth-Dunne, p. 24.

36. Descr. de l'Egypte, p. 676, records that "The poor of the Mosque of al-Azhar receive rice and honey valued as 20,489 médins or 717 francs."

To the right of his new sanctuary 'Abd-al-Raḥmān built another minaret and a small court, with a cistern and drinking fountain, in addition to a classroom, where orphans could study the Qur'ān. It was by this court that he prepared a large inner room with a tomb for his burial. Between these additions and the side street, at the south-east corner of the mosque enclosure, he constructed a gateway called *Bāb al-Ṣa'a'idah*, with *Riwāq al-Ṣa'a'idah* near by. This was a residential unit for the students of Upper Egypt, containing washing facilities, a kitchen and library, in addition to rooms for the students' chests and spaces where they could sleep in cold weather.

The building program also involved changes in the front of the mosque. In order to make a handsome façade, the outer wall of Taybars' college was rebuilt and aligned in a symmetrical way with the front wall of the College of Aqbughā. The two college buildings were then joined together by a large outer gateway and beautified by a third minaret, which was torn down in 1896 to make way for some other improvements. Next to the College of Taybars a water wheel and lavatory were also built, with lodgings³⁷ over them for students from 'Irāq and India, while the quarters for Sudanese students were renovated.

In addition to the funds which he supplied for the distribution of food, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā established endowments to supply oil for the students' lamps and to support a Shāfi'ī prayer leader at the old prayer niche, as well as a Mālikī one for the new sanctuary.

This generosity was a good example of the mediaeval tendency to do things in a dramatic way. Needless to say, it greatly added to the prestige of al-Azhar and inspired other men of wealth to favor the mosque in a similar manner. On April 24, 1789, for instance, the Pasha began to paint all of the walls of al-Azhar with lime and ochre. In the meantime the ruling sultāns in North Africa and Turkey sent gifts. During the war of 1788 between Turkey and Russia the Ottoman Pasha asked the shaykhs to read the traditions of the Prophet, so as to win the favor of Allāh. When a sum of money was sent from Istanbūl to be distributed to the students, the shaykhs showed their registers of students' names to the Pasha, who immediately increased the size of the gift.³⁸

37. *Riwāq al-Baghdādiyah wa Riwāq al-Hunūd*; also *Riwāq al-Dakarīnah*.

38. Jabartī, Part II, pp. 108, 160, 178; (*Merveilles*) Tome IV, p. 187, Tome V, pp. 27, 28, 66. Creswell (*Égypt*) Vol. I, p. 41.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century two Circasian Mamlūks³⁹ dominated the internal affairs of Egypt in such an oppressive way that the period was one of misery and strife. Unfortunately some of the quarrels took place inside of al-Azhar in a way which was most distressing.

In 1778, when Shaykh Aḥmad al-Damanhūrī died, there was a dispute about appointing a Rector to follow him. The two opposing candidates were the Shaykhs al-'Arīshī and al-'Arūsī. Members of the 'ulamā', government officials and the populace took sides. As al-'Arīshī presided over the Syrian students, they gave him their support, while the Turkish students joined the opposing party. After the dispute had become so bitter that a Turkish student was killed, the governor sent the police to stop the conflict. Some of the Syrians were arrested, their lodgings in al-Azhar were closed and part of their rations became used as an indemnity for the Turks. Although al-'Arīshī was confined to his house, al-'Arūsī being appointed as Shaykh al-Azhar, it required seven months to establish normal conditions.⁴⁰

On another occasion a Mamlūk official tried to prevent the North African students from enjoying their privileges and attempted to arrest a popular shaykh who defended the students' rights. He even imprisoned two other shaykhs, sent to negotiate the matter with him. Accordingly, the Rector stopped classes and the call to prayer, locking the gates of the mosque. At the same time the shopkeepers in the neighborhood closed their stores, while the students shouted from the minarets. Although the Mamlūk officers failed to restore order even after three students had been killed, Shaykh al-Sādāt and the Turkish Pasha finally negotiated a peace.⁴¹

Fortunately, however, most of the disputes were not inside of al-Azhar, but took the form of popular uprisings against the injustice of the rulers. Time and time again the shaykhs championed the cause of the Egyptians, acting as mediators between them and their Mamlūk masters.

In 1790 there was a good example of the kind of excitement which was so often aroused. An agent of the governor named Ḥusayn Bāy led some soldiers to the house of a dervish, where

39. Ibrāhīm, Shaykh al-Balad, and Murād, Amīr al-Hajj.

40. Jabartī, Part II, p. 51; (*Merveilles*) Tome IV, pp. 62-63; Mubārak, Part IV, p. 32. 'Abd-al-Rahmān ibn-'Umar al-'Arīshī was the Ḥanafī Muftī, while Aḥmad al-'Arūsī was a Shāfi'ī.

41. Sharqāwī, Part III, pp. 9-11.

they looted the furnishings, even robbing the women of their jewelry. Immediately the populace came to the rescue of the oppressed family. Men, women and children rushed to al-Azhar for help. Boys climbed the minarets to shout and beat improvised drums. One of the shaykhs cried out, "Tomorrow we'll gather the crowds and the populace from Būlāq, Old Cairo and other parts of the city! We'll join in pillaging the houses of the amīrs as our homes have been pillaged! We'll die as martyrs, or Allāh will give us triumph!" As usually happened when the shaykhs and the people joined together, the officials backed down, persuading the mobs momentarily to be quiet.⁴²

It is no wonder that the common people were dissatisfied. The Mamlūks lived in palaces with costly luxuries brought from foreign lands. They handled large quantities of gold, supporting their troops with great extravagance. 'Alī Bāy al-Kabīr, for instance, had an army of 40,000 men clad in garments of cotton and silk. When he joined with al-Zāhir in Palestine to revolt against the Turks, he provided twenty-five camel loads of gold and 96,000 pounds in cash. The great merchants, too, were enormously rich. In 1788 one of them awaited a caravan of six thousand camels bearing fabrics, coffee and spices through Arabia to Egypt. Instead, however, of trying to improve the conditions of the poor, the wealthy classes exploited them.⁴³

Ibrāhīm and Murād, the two leading Mamlūk officials, were so anxious to get money that they invented new forms of taxation and trade monopolies. They robbed the foreign merchants of their legitimate means of trade, wrecking the overseas commerce by charging unreasonable customs dues. They needed money to purchase Mamlūk horsemen, as well as to hire foreign mercenaries. 'Alī Bāy al-Kabīr had units of paid Nubian and Arab soldiers, whereas abū-al-Dhahab hired Greeks and Turks, with an Englishman to train his artillery. Murād Bāy followed their example by engaging experts from Greece and Crete to manage his powder factories and foundries, and to help organize his navy. Because it was necessary to pay the foreigners in cash, rather than by means of landed fiefs, the officials of the late eighteenth century were obliged to exploit the country and to squeeze the foreign merchants in a way that courted disaster.

42. Jabartī, Part II, p. 189; (*Merveilles*) Tome V, p. 85. The Dervish was Salīm al-Jazzār, Shaykh of the Bayyūmiyah order and attached to the shrine of al-Ḥusayn near al-Azhar.

43. See bibliography, Jabartī, Sharqāwī, Volney, Gibb (*Isl. Soc.*).

Frequent failures of the Nile flood, epidemics of the bubonic plague, inflation and the loss of the Far Eastern trade, combined with excessive taxation, made the lives of the poor Egyptian peasants and townspeople unbearable. What was even more difficult for the people to endure was the immorality and brutality of the Mamlūk troops. One soldier took a woman into a mosque during Ramaḍān, to rape her after the noonday prayer. Even during Ramaḍān prostitutes, homosexuals, drug dealers and liquor vendors, as well as agents for gambling tables, became a public menace. The soldiers blackmailed the shopkeepers for protection from looting and forced the peasants to sell their products at unfair prices. They raised false taxes, stole animals, took goods from the river boats, beat the farm laborers and even killed innocent persons.

The nomads added to the misery by raiding peasant farm lands and robbing caravans. Starving peasants flocked to Cairo, only to find unemployment and filthy slums. Between 250,000 and 300,000 people were thus crowded into the capital, where 12,000 unruly soldiers were ever ready to prey on them. On the other hand the population of a provincial city like Alexandria dwindled to 15,000 while that of Egypt as a whole was reduced to about two million.⁴⁴

In the midst of this desolation, al-Azhar was like an oasis. In spite of occasional quarrels, the old mosque kept spiritual and intellectual influences alive and gave hope to wretched people in the last stages of desperation. As the eighteenth century came to a close, al-Azhar was undoubtedly the most important mosque and center of higher learning in Egypt.

Cultural Life at the End of the Eighteenth Century

During the Mamlūk period there were more than seventy colleges in Cairo, ranging in size from small chapels, in which one or two scholars taught a few students, to the great university colleges endowed by the Sulṭāns. There were also many mosques in which study circles were encouraged. Although a few new schools and mosque centers were added while the Ottomans were in power,⁴⁵ many of the older institutions ceased to exist because their endowments were neglected. At the end of the eighteenth

44. Descr. de l'Egypte, pp. 694, 695.

45. Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 15-24. About 1695 Ismā'il Pasha founded a college and both 'Uthmān and 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā built schools.

century only twenty colleges and a score of mosques were able to provide for higher education.

Sir Hamilton Gibb and Professor Bowen explain that even though al-Azhar was not the only institution of its kind,

It was undoubtedly the most important (because it was the richest) in the Arabic lands. It was at this period tolerably well staffed and endowed, had some sixty to seventy professors and a great number of students drawn mostly from Cairo itself and the provinces of Egypt, but also from other Muslim lands. Owing to its great reputation, the other 'madrasahs' and college mosques of Cairo had become satellites, and though they retained a certain independence in the matter of their endowments, the teaching posts were held as a rule by the shaykhs of al-Azhar. In addition there were some eighteen or twenty towns in Egypt with college mosques, varying in number from one to seven or so. In these again, the principal teachers were generally local shaykhs trained at al-Azhar, but in return they supplied the latter with many of its most prominent scholars. Of these provincial schools the most active were at Rosetta, Damietta, Desūk, Maḥalla, Maṣūra, and Ṭanṭa in the Delta, and Ṭaḥṭa in Upper Egypt.

Not one of the head shaykhs of al-Azhar in the eighteenth century was of Cairene origin.⁴⁶

During the end of the Ottoman period scholarship was not as progressive as it had been in earlier times. Lane wrote that many scholars in Egypt "Are deeply versed in Arabic grammar, rhetoric and polite literature, though the sciences mostly pursued in this country are theology and jurisprudence. Few of the 'Ulamā' of Egypt are well acquainted with the history of their own nation; much less with that of other people." "Very few of them study medicine, chymistry—the mathematics or astronomy. The Egyptian medical and surgical practitioners are mostly barbers." "Alchymy is more studied in this country than pure chymistry; and astrology, more than astronomy." "To say that the earth revolves round the sun, they consider absolute heresy."⁴⁷

Scholarship at Cairo had also become provincial, because Egyptians seldom went abroad for foreign study, except as they met with learned men during the pilgrimage to Makkah. There

46. Quoted from Gibb (*Isl. Soc.*) Vol. I, Part II, pp. 154, 155, but with spelling of *Shaykh* changed.

47. Lane, pp. 222, 223.

were, however, a few scholars⁴⁸ who kept alive an interest in scientific and foreign studies, as is proved by the biographies of two well known shaykhs of al-Azhar, both of whom were born about 1689.

One of them was Aḥmad ibn-al-Mun'im al-Damanhūrī, who was brought up as a child in one of the towns of the Delta. While still young he began to study at al-Azhar, where he devoted himself to the Islamic sciences, mastering all four codes of jurisprudence. In the course of time he became a teacher, holding his classes at the shrine of al-Husayn across the square from al-Azhar. In 1763 he went on the pilgrimage to Makkah and five years later was chosen to be rector, which position he filled until he died in 1778. He was a prolific writer, producing many books about the legal and religious sciences. He was not content, however, to limit his research to the Islamic studies taught at al-Azhar. He also attended private classes in order to understand the Greek sciences. Thus he studied mathematics, including arithmetic, computation, algebra, trapeziums and geometry. He worked, moreover, with astrolabes, astronomical tables, the declension of the sun and other phases of astronomy. He studied the three realms: animal, vegetable and mineral, including some practical subjects like the locating of water for wells. He was also interested in anatomy, the causes and symptoms of diseases, scorpion sting, the treatment of piles and other medical subjects.⁴⁹

The other scholar was Shaykh Ḥasan al-Jabartī, the father of the historian. He learned the orthodox subjects under the auspices of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Nashartī, Rector of al-Azhar. He also studied the Greek sciences with a scholar from India and before he died in 1774 learned something about both medicine and engineering.⁵⁰ The significant point to notice about this learned man is that he was the last person for many years to occupy himself with philosophy, astronomy and geometry at al-Azhar, except as his son⁵¹ kept alive some of his interest in astronomy.

The majority of the teachers of the period believed that the purpose of education was to pass on to their students what they themselves had derived from the learned men of former generations. Thus their compositions were "Imitative books, depending

48. Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 79-83.

49. Jabartī, Part II, pp. 25-27; (*Merveilles*) Vol. IV, p. 16.

50. Sharqāwī, Part I, pp. 3-16.

51. 'Abd-al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, the historian, 1754-1825.

upon imitation, poisoned by dependence and a narrow horizon, with concern and care for expression rather than for meaning or research." "Learning, investigation, instruction and recording all went in a circle around the text, with its explanations, glosses and notes, without the possibility of proceeding to a new idea or opinion, or to objective investigation."⁵²

The basis of study was as a rule an important mediaeval text, an abridgement of which was printed along with comments. On the same page there was apt to be an exposition of the meaning, frequently accompanied by critical notes and glosses on the margin.⁵³ Works of this sort were too often memorized by the students, without a deep understanding of the subject.

The Mosque Building

By the end of the Ottoman period⁵⁴ the district in which al-Azhar was located had become a crowded quarter with narrow streets, small shops and ancient tenements. Around the exterior of the mosque there were high stone walls, separating the inner courtyard and colonnades from the tumult of the bazaars.

The principal gateway was the one built by Katkhudā in the north-west façade. It was called the Barbers' Gate⁵⁵ because the students were shaved in the adjoining passageway. There were five less important gateways on the sides and in the rear.

At the end of the eighteenth century there were six minarets, one of them being torn down in 1896. The call to prayer was given from all of them and they were decorated with lanterns for feasts and Ramaḍān.

Originally there were seven sundials, four on the right hand side of the open court, to determine the time for the noon prayer, and three on the left to tell when the afternoon prayer was due. The only one of these sundials still existing was given by Aḥmad Pasha in 1748. When he asked the Rector about the mathematics and astronomy in the curriculum, he was told that the shaykhs could not afford to buy instruments and only knew enough about these subjects to tell the times for religious exer-

52. Free translation from Sharqāwī, Part II, p. 163.

53. The Arabic terms are: text, *al-matn*; abridgement, *al-mukhtaṣar* or *al-ikhtisār*; comments, *al-sharḥ*; exposition, *al-ḥāshiyah*; critical notes, *al-taqrīr*; margin, *al-hāmish*.

54. See Appendix II.

55. Bāb al-Mizayyinīn.

cises and to divide inheritance. Accordingly, the Pasha installed his sundial in order to arouse an interest in astronomy.⁵⁶

In spite of numerous earthquakes, the central court had not been radically changed since Fāṭimid times.⁵⁷ It was open to the sky and flanked on both sides by deep colonnades or loggias. Across the court from the main entrance there was the sanctuary, with the addition built by Katkhudā behind it. Matting covered the floors of this sanctuary and the other loggias. As it was changed every year and the students did not walk on it with their shoes, it was kept in good condition.

Before electricity was installed, lighting was a difficult problem as, except for the sanctuary, the mosque remained open all night. During Ramaḍān there was more light than usual, but at other times the lights were put out after the evening prayer. The old lanterns were hung between the columns and fed by sesame oil. 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Katkhudā provided the funds to keep four brass lamps set on solid bases burning all night.

As Katkhudā also provided a new pulpit for his sanctuary, the old pulpit was moved to the Mosque of al-Ḥākīm.⁵⁸ In addition to the original prayer niche, there was a new one in the rear wall of Katkhudā's sanctuary, with three smaller ones in the same wall, making possible a prayer niche for each of the four codes of law.

One of the most unusual features of al-Azhar was the *riwāq* system.⁵⁹ Instead of residential quadrangles, like the ones which still exist at al-Najaf and other centers, there were spacious loggias, rear rooms, upper chambers, cellars and storage spaces, assigned to residential units, each one of which was endowed to care for the students of some particular country, Egyptian province or code of law. Even if a student lived outside of the mosque, he was registered with one of these units, for the sake of the bread dole and the providing of information to the police.

On each side of the open courtyard of al-Azhar the colonnade is 120 feet long and 36 feet deep, with two rows of columns supporting the roof. Although it has been suggested⁶⁰ that these loggias were built by the Fāṭimid Caliph al-'Azīz, when he ar-

56. The Rector was 'Abd-Allāh al-Shubrāwī. See Jabartī, Part I, p. 187; (Merveilles) Tome II, pp. 110-113.

57. The open court is *al-ṣaḥn* and the sanctuary *al-maḥṣūrah*.

58. Yūnus, p. 44. Arminjon, p. 56. The pulpit was *al-minbar* and the prayer niche *al-mihrāb*.

59. *Riwāq* is singular, the plural is *arwiqah*. See Appendix IV.

60. Hauteceur, Texte I, p. 218.

ranged for thirty-five students to live at al-Azhar, it is more likely that they were part of the original building. Probably, however, during the Fāṭimid period these spacious loggias were divided by wooden screens, so as to provide dormitory space for different groups of students. Certain of the sections may also have been used as classrooms in Mamlūk times.

Because the Arabic word for portico is *al-riwāq*, the division of the loggia to which a student was assigned came to be called *al-riwāq*. The idea of having different residential units for different national groups was an old one, existing in some of the early Egyptian monasteries.⁶¹

In the course of time extra rooms were added to the loggias, with rear chambers, basements and upper stories, so that the mosque was able to accommodate a large number of students.

The shaykh in charge of each *riwāq* belonged to the same community as the students in his unit. He was assisted by his deputy, *al-naqīb*, and perhaps also by a few teachers. In a large *riwāq* there must have been a librarian, as well as servants to care for the water pump, cleaning of the rooms, guarding the doorway and other duties. If a teen age boy was unruly, he was apt to be locked in a dark closet or else to have his rations discontinued for a time.

In addition to the large units of this system described in Appendix IV, there were also thirteen smaller ones, each of which was called a *ḥārah*.⁶² As the narrow type of street in Cairo is called *al-ḥārah*, the same term was applied to a small residential unit, often used more for the storing of belongings than for sleep and study.

If a student lived in the mosque, he kept his chest of clothing in his unit. During most of the year he spent the night in the open court, or *ṣaḥn*, but if it was cold he went to sleep in his *riwāq* or a corner of the sanctuary. In the evening he borrowed a piece of straw matting from the mosque, spreading it out to sleep on. At dawn he returned the matting to its place and, if he was fortunate enough to have a sheepskin or small rug of his own, he stored it with his chest of belongings.

Although some of the large units had kitchens, many of the students cooked their food on charcoal braziers in so many parts of the mosque, that al-Azhar sometimes looked like a restaurant. An important unit often had toilet and washing facilities, but

61. Subḥī, p. 115.

62. Khaffājī, Vol. II, p. 102. Yūnus, p. 48.

in order to provide for day students and the members of small units, there was a common washroom, *al-miḍā'ah*, behind the colonnade to the left of the central court. In the center of this lavatory there were six tanks with running water for washing and ablutions, the latrines being placed around the sides of the room.

Although in theory the endowment of a residential unit supplied a ration of bread, a student was sometimes obliged to attend classes for several years and to pass an examination, before he became eligible to receive the dole. The bread was given out by representatives of the residential units, on the left hand side of the open court, between dawn and 10:00 A.M.

Because of this *riwāq* system, al-Azhar was a college, or *madrasah* for students, as well as a great assembly mosque and place of refuge for the populace. Perhaps the tremendous prestige which it enjoyed at the end of the eighteenth century was due to the fact that it served so many useful purposes.

Student Life

During the late Ottoman period a boy was expected to memorize at least part of the Qur'ān and to learn how to read and write, either in a mosque school or private class. Sometimes he also had an opportunity to study arithmetic with the public weigher or land measurer.⁶³ When he reached his early teens, if he lived in Cairo, his father or elder brother led him to al-Azhar, where he joined classes for boys of his age. If, on the other hand, he came from one of the provincial towns, his father was obliged to put him on a boat or donkey, sending him off to school with his chest of clothes and basket of provisions.

Some of the boys were the sons of shaykhs, seeking to be trained to become their fathers' successors. Others were anxious to learn enough to earn a living, as well as to escape military service and enforced labor on the canals.

The average student was not a saint but a very normal boy, apt to become involved in brawls about his rations. There were, however, so few amusements and the atmosphere of al-Azhar was so highly charged with intellectual and spiritual forces, that on the whole the students were industrious and well behaved.

Many of the students had relatives in Cairo, so that they could live in pleasant homes, but if a boy came from outside the

63. The mosque school was *al-kuttāb*, the public weigher *al-qabbānī* and the land measurer *al-massāḥ*.

city and could not afford to rent lodgings, his life was monastic and ascetic. Unless his family supplied him with money and food, or he was old enough to copy books and give private lessons, he was obliged to depend upon his *riwāq* and the dole of bread.

Some of the students had sheepskins to sit on in the day time and to use as mattresses at night. As many of the boys were too poor to afford bedding, they slept on the straw matting, wrapped in their robes. If the weather was hot they preferred to sleep in the open courtyard, rather than in the loggias and inner rooms. The courtyard was also the place where a student dried his bread, so as to preserve it until he softened it with water, eating it with vinegar and vegetables such as leeks and radishes.

An indigent student was often undernourished and suffered from scabies and skin infections. He had so few clothes, books and other possessions, that he could store his belongings in a chest. Needless to say he was obliged to repair his clothing and shoes, to keep his garments free from lice and to attend to his laundry without the help of servants. His cooking was accomplished in the kitchen of his residential unit or else on a charcoal brazier in the open court. Thus for a boy from a poor family life at al-Azhar meant hard work with few comforts.

The son of a well-to-do family had a much easier time. In addition to receiving supplies from home, he could buy fruit and sweets in the nearby shops. Even if he did not live with a family, he could afford to rent lodgings, with floor covering and bedding. He could also enjoy clean clothes, a few books and some conveniences for heating, lighting and cooking. When Professor Arminjon visited a student in his lodgings,⁶⁴ he found that he had a palm strip bed, a chest for clothing, a sheepskin, a large water jar and a lamp with an extra bottle of oil, as well as twelve textbooks. A student from some nearby place could receive supplies from home every month, whereas a boy from Upper Egypt might only obtain his provisions twice a year. These stores included dried wheat bread, cooking fat, cheese, flour, wheat ground with milk,⁶⁵ lentils, onions, fuel and lamp wicks, as well as water jars and, when necessary, a frying pan.

Almost all of the Egyptian boys went home for Ramaḍān and those who lived near Cairo could also spend the Prophet's Birthday and other feasts at home. Even the teen-age boys often

64. Arminjon, p. 88. Compare Ḥusayn's (*Stream of Days*).

65. Kishk.

married during the vacations, leaving their brides with their relatives.

A foreign student generally lived in the *riwāq* assigned to his country and found it difficult to go home even for the long holidays. When he finished his course it was a great event in his life, often celebrated by a party for his comrades, with candles, poetry readings and coffee.

All of the students wore Oriental robes and at least the mature ones wound white cloths around their caps in the form of turbans. Only descendants of the Prophet wore green cloths. On Thursday afternoons it was the custom to go to the Nile at Būlāq to play ball, wash and enjoy contests—often violent ones. Many of the students also enjoyed visiting festivals in the vicinity of Cairo. On Fridays, after taking part in the noon time service, most of the boys visited their friends or went to the cemeteries, where relatives were buried.

If one of the students died, his comrades and relatives held an evening service lighted by small candles. If a professor died, no classes were held during three days of mourning. The death was announced throughout the city, so that many high officials, leading shaykhs and less important persons attended the funeral. The Rector himself conducted the prayers; friends also read poetry over the uncovered bier. During three days teachers and students went to the chair of the dead shaykh to honor his memory. Then for four successive weeks, after the Friday service, the members of the professor's class read passages from the Qur'ān beside his vacant chair.

Lane-Poole described this old-time life and the studies at al-Azhar in the following way:

Learned professors expound these sciences according to the methods of the four orthodox sects of Islām, to enthusiastic knots of students, who sit on the ground before them in a semicircle.

The most learned men in Egypt, and indeed in all the countries round about, come hither to teach the results of their studies without reward. The students receive daily allowances of food, provided by the endowments of the *riwāq*, to which they are attached—the bequests of pious folk who wished to pave their own road to Paradise; and being poor, these earnest followers of the path of wisdom eke out a scanty livelihood by taking private pupils and copying manuscripts.

By the same methods, and by reciting the Korān at festivals, the professors who devote their lives to teaching at al-Azhar manage to keep themselves alive. [The students] Meet together over a crust of bread and a water bottle to debate questions of Grammar and Koranic criticism.⁶⁶

Classes and Teachers

The French survey of Egypt, which was made at the end of the eighteenth century, contains the following paragraph.

The boys who graduate from the primary schools and desire to continue their studies become familiar with the prescribed books and go to the great mosque of al-Azhar to hear the lectures and expositions of the shaykhs. This mosque is in a way the unique university of Egypt. It has a faculty of forty or fifty professors, five or six of whom are greatly sought after.⁶⁷

As there were no entrance examinations, a boy might enter al-Azhar as soon as he had memorized at least part of the Qur'ān and learned how to read and write in his local school. When he reached the mosque, he probably spent a year or two learning to understand the Qur'ān and the Arabic language thoroughly enough to enable him to join more advanced classes.

In mediaeval times a student often limited his study to one subject at a time, but during the eighteenth century a normal boy attended two or more classes every day. There was no fixed schedule, but a mature student spent his day somewhat as follows:

- 3:30 a.m. Ceremonial washing and *dawn prayer*.
- 4:00 a.m. A class in theology, the traditions or commentary, after which the dole of bread was obtained.
- 6:00 a.m. A class connected with legal studies.
(During the winter the hours were later than in summer, as the dawn and sunrise varied with the seasons.)
- 10:00 a.m. Time for study and a meal of horse beans, leeks, bread and other forms of food. Sometimes there was a class in calligraphy or some other supplementary subject in the late morning.

66. Lane-Poole (*Cairo*) pp. 184-186. The four sects are the four codes of orthodox jurisprudence.

67. Descr. de l'Égypte, p. 393. Other authorities state that there were at least sixty professors: Gibb (*Isl. Soc.*) Vol. I, Part II, p. 154, 155; Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 27-29.

- 12:00 *Noon prayer*, followed by a class either in grammar, rhetoric, or the sources of the law and jurisprudence.
- 3:30 p.m. The *afternoon prayer*, after which there was leisure for a siesta, preparation of lessons, and a supper of cheese, bread, sweets and other things.
- 6:15 p.m. The *sunset prayer*, followed by a class in some extra subject like logic or philosophy.
- 8:30 p.m. The *evening prayer* and time for discussions with teachers and friends before bed time.⁶⁸
(During the winter the afternoon and sunset prayers were earlier than in summer, so that the afternoon schedule was changed in accordance with the seasons.)

Each year that a student spent at al-Azhar he could select different subjects and join different classes, until both he and his teachers felt satisfied that he knew enough to seek employment in some college, government office, mosque or court of law. Although most of the class circles met in the sanctuaries and colonnades of al-Azhar itself, there were so many boys that it was necessary to use other places as well. Thus Arminjon says that: "In almost all of the mosques situated in the center of the Arab Quarter, courses are held for the students of the University, who are too numerous to find space at al-Azhar."⁶⁹

If a boy was blind or incapable of advanced study, he could spend three years at al-Azhar, studying some grammar in addition to the recital and intoning of the Qur'ān, so as to be trained to join the guild of Qur'ān readers. The members of this profession were in great demand, not only for reading the Qur'ān to groups in the mosques, but also for chanting it at feasts, weddings, public ceremonies and rituals in private homes.

Many a student spent six years at al-Azhar, during which time he was trained to become a school teacher, legal assistant or junior official.

A man of greater ambition might remain at the mosque for a longer period of time, until he could master the advanced subjects, so as to become a judge, muftī, professor or mosque leader.

In the eighteenth century the administration of al-Azhar was

68. The schedule is chiefly derived from the routine of Ibrāhīm al-Manūfi; see Arminjon, pp. 89-91. The five prayers were dawn, *al-fajr*; noon, *al-ẓuhr*; afternoon, *al-'aṣr*; sunset, *al-maghrib*; evening, *al-'ishā'*.

69. Arminjon, p. 60. Compare Gairdner, p. 260.

not very large or highly centralized. The rector was in charge of the mosque as a whole, with persons under him to conduct the services, give the call to prayer, help with the finances and care for the building. The shaykh of each residential unit was responsible for the registration and discipline of the students entrusted to him, while the head of each code of jurisprudence was in charge of the classes related to his legal system. As each boy could choose his own teachers and courses of study and as there were no entrance requirements, examinations, records of credit, reports about absences or rigid rules for discipline, the administrative machinery was exceedingly simple. This was especially true, as a member of the faculty was not appointed in a formal way, but held classes in the mosque because the students liked his teaching and wished to join his circle.

A professor was an *'ālim*,⁷⁰ whose scholarship depended upon many years of advanced study, giving him recognition as one of the *'ulamā'*. He was called *ustādh* or *shaykh*, being assigned a column against which he could lean as he sat in his chair, facing Makkah, with the students on the floor in front of him. He was accustomed to start his class by saying "In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Thanks be to Allāh." Then he would repeat a prayer for the Prophet before he dictated his lesson and answered the students' questions. When the period came to an end, the students rose to kiss their professor's hand.

The discipline was not always very good, as the class hours were not definitely fixed and the students were apt to leave their circles, to warm themselves in winter or sleep in summer. As the teen age boys were mischievous, a teacher was sometimes obliged to give one of them a beating, expelling him from his class. The older students, on the other hand, were so anxious to learn and so attached to their teachers that they were attentive, frequently inviting a professor to have tea with them, after completing a textbook.

As Arabic printing was expensive, groups of students often pooled their resources, so as to purchase abridgements of the books they needed. There was no central library in the eighteenth century, but a student could often find books in his residential unit.

Small groups of students were accustomed to prepare for their classes together. After the brighter ones had helped the others to

70. "Learned," "savant."

understand the subject matter, they memorized their notes and manuals. If a clever student developed the ability to help his classmates, he might try to form a circle of his own, so as to become a teacher. His friends helped him, whereas his competitors made fun of him by asking embarrassing questions, and his teachers tested his ability by asking him to explain difficult matters. If the novice failed, he was obliged to transfer his efforts to some school less important than al-Azhar, but if he was successful he was assigned a column and allowed to teach, at the same time that he was completing advanced courses in the mosque.

Sometimes a son was trained to be his father's successor by serving as the assistant, or *al-mu'id*, in his father's class, helping to dictate the notes and to make sure that the students understood them. When a professor died it was not uncommon for his son to take his place, carrying on his classes without interruption.

Needless to say all of the classes were not conducted in the same way. Al-Azhar was open to every man and boy who was a Muslim of a reasonable age. It comprised a whole system of education from elementary school lessons to advanced graduate study. One visitor found a group of children on one side of the mosque and a class of white bearded men on the other. The classes, therefore, ranged from recitations for adolescent boys to study circles, lectures and private lessons for the older scholars.

Classes began a fortnight after the end of Ramaḍān and continued until the month preceding Ramaḍān of the following year. There was a vacation of twenty days for the feast at the end of the pilgrimage,⁷¹ another of thirty days for the birthday of al-Sayyid al-Badawī⁷² and an even longer holiday for the birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad. Accordingly, the classes met for only about seven months during the year.

All of the shaykhs engaged in teaching the younger students were directly attached to al-Azhar. They were invariably more concerned with the form of the material in the textbooks than with initiative in answering questions. As a rule the student studied only one book in connection with one class, but some of the books had abridgements, commentaries and notes to supplement them. Only the really mature men were permitted to read the critical notes, which were apt to be confusing. Memory played

71. *ʿId al-Adhā*.

72. A mediaeval saint buried at Ṭanṭā. See Enc. Isl. (1913) Vol. 1, p. 192. The Prophet's birthday is *Mawlid al-Nabī*.

such an important part, that the student often learned by heart large portions of his textbooks, in addition to the notes taken down by dictation from his professor.

Although the methods were still mediaeval, the courses were very thorough. In studying grammar, for instance, the student mastered a different textbook every year for at least ten years, most of the books being studied twice over with different teachers. Sometimes a book was so difficult that it required two years rather than one, to do justice to it.⁷³

During the Ottoman period al-Azhar as an institution did not grant diplomas, but as in former times, a student was able to obtain a certificate from his professor when he completed a course. His collection of certificates helped him to find work when he left the mosque.⁷⁴

From what has been said it is evident that al-Azhar was a mosque-college rather than a true university during the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the most important part of an institution is the faculty and al-Azhar was the center of a group of true scholars. Although their learning was mediaeval, it was none the less impressive. They worked hard, exerted a great influence over their students, championed the rights of the common people and were greatly respected by all classes of society. It was these shaykhs with their white turbans, flowing robes and handsome beards, who made al-Azhar famous throughout the world. Most of them were born in the Egyptian provinces, but a few came from Ethiopia, the Ḥijāz of Arabia, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Turkey and al-Yaman.⁷⁵ Examples have already been given of certain shaykhs who were mystics and of others who studied the Greek sciences. A few scholars were poets and men of letters,⁷⁶ but most of the professors devoted themselves to linguistic, legal and religious studies, living in a simple and consecrated way.

Lane wrote about the shaykhs in a delightful manner when he said the

Learning was in a much more flourishing state in Cairo before the entrance of the French army than it has been in later years. It suffered severely from this invasion; not through direct opposition, but in consequence of the panic

73. See Appendix III for more details about courses and textbooks.

74. A certificate is *al-ijāzah*; the collection *al-barnāmiḡ*.

75. Jabartī, Rajab, Khaffājī, Sharqāwī and Heyworth-Dunne give many examples of scholars' lives.

76. Ḥasan al-Badrī al-Ḥijāzī was an example of a poet.

which the event occasioned, and the troubles by which it was followed. Before that period, a sheykh who had studied at al-Azhar, if he had only two boys, sons of a moderately rich fellāh, to educate, lived in luxury; his two pupils served him, cleaned his house, prepared his food, and, though they partook of it with him, were his menial attendants at every time but that of eating; they followed him whenever he went out; carried his shoes (and often kissed them when they took them off) and on his entering a mosque; and in every case treated him with the honour due a prince. He was then distinguished by an ample dress, and the large formal turban called a 'mukleh' and as he passed along the street, whether on foot or mounted on an ass or a mule, passengers often pressed towards him to implore a short ejaculatory prayer on their behalf; and he who succeeded in obtaining this wish believed himself especially blessed: if he passed by a Frank riding, the latter was obliged to dismount; if he went to a butcher to procure some meat (for he found it best to do so, and not to send another), the butcher refused to make any charge; but kissed his hand, and received as an honour and a blessing whatever he chose to give.⁷⁷

Into the midst of this old-time way of life, with its tyranny, mysticism and mediaeval culture, burst Napoleon Bonaparte, whose invasion was the prelude to the modern history of Egypt and a new chapter in the fortunes of al-Azhar.

77. Lane, pp. 218, 219.

1798-1882

- 1798-1799 Napoleon's occupation of Egypt. Battle of the Pyramids, rebellion in Cairo, expedition in Palestine, return to France.
- 1800 Ottoman invasion, rebellion in Cairo, assassination of Kléber, June 1st al-Azhar closed.
- 1801 Joint British-Ottoman attack, French evacuation, June 2nd, al-Azhar reopened.
- 1805 Muḥammad 'Alī took the place of the Ottoman Pasha.
- 1811 Massacre of the Mamlūks, war with the Wahnābīs and confiscation of endowments.
- 1820-1848 Progressive reforms in Egypt, invasion of the Sudan. Ibrāhīm Pasha's war with the Greeks and occupation of Syria.
- 1848 Ibrāhīm Pasha succeeded Muḥammad 'Alī, but died prematurely.
- 1848-1854 'Abbās Ḥilmī, reaction against European influences.
- 1854-1863 Sa'id, who signed the Suez Canal concession and restored the endowments to their owners.
- 1863-1879 Ismā'il introduced progressive reforms.
1869, the Suez Canal opened.
1871-1879, Jamāl-al-Dīn al-Afghānī in Cairo.
June, 1879, the Khedive Ismā'il abdicated.
- 1879-1882 Tawfiq established International Commission for liquidation of Egyptian debts.
1881, Aḥmad al-'Arābī and 'Alī Fahmī caused an officers' revolt.
- 1882 June 11th, fracas in Alexandria, British landing.
Sept. 13th, Battle of Tall al-Kabīr, followed by British occupation of Cairo.

The Beginning Of Modern History

The French Occupation

DURING the year 1798 the Directory in France commissioned Napoleon Bonaparte to organize a great armada for the invasion of Egypt. The principal reason for sending this force to the eastern Mediterranean was to destroy the British trade, so as to prepare the way for the conquest of England. The French fleet left Toulon in the early summer, picked up reinforcements from Italy, occupied Malta in June and reached Egypt on July 1st. The next day Napoleon's troops entered Alexandria. Although Nelson with his British men-of-war tried to intercept the French force, he had the ill fortune to leave Alexandria the day before Napoleon arrived.

Bonaparte made use of psychological warfare to prepare the way for his invasion. He sent a communication to the Turkish Pasha, assuring him that the French would rescue him from the unruly Mamlūks and strengthen Ottoman rule. He also issued a proclamation to the people of Egypt, telling them that he was coming, not only to punish their Mamlūk officials for interfering with French trade, but also to replace their evil rule with a new régime of justice.

Although Napoleon's army encountered many hardships, with his genius for military tactics he overcame all resistance, defeating the Ottoman Pasha and Mamlūk officers on July 21st, at the Battle of the Pyramids. During this crisis the shaykhs of al-Azhar read the traditions of al-Bukhārī and prayed for defense of their country. After the Mamlūk defeat they sent a petition to Bonaparte asking for favorable treatment. As Napoleon sent a courteous reply, the populace allowed him to occupy Cairo on July 25th, without real opposition.

Napoleon naturally tried to gain control of the Mamlūk soldiers, many of whom sought refuge at al-Azhar. His principal aim, however, was to gain the good will of the indigenous Egyptian population, especially of their true leaders, who were the shaykhs of al-Azhar. Accordingly, after he had entered Cairo

he chose ten shaykhs to form a council, or *dīwān*, with the Rector of al-Azhar, Shaykh 'Abd-Allāh al-Sharqāwī, as their presiding officer.¹

Bonaparte tried to help the people by establishing the "Institut d'Egypte," so as to enable his French experts to give technical advice. It was these experts who compiled the monumental *Description de l'Egypte*, subsequently printed in Paris. He also took part in observing the Prophet's Birthday and frequently had discussions about Islamic affairs with the scholars. In spite, however, of Bonaparte's efforts to win the confidence of the Egyptians, they did not cooperate with him in a wholehearted way. Like all sincere members of the theocracy of Islām they were unable to accept the rule of an unbeliever. Then when the French employed a staff of Christian Copts to conduct a tax census, discontent turned into open hostility. Shaykh al-Sādāt formed a committee at al-Azhar to arm and incite the population, while agitators went through the city calling upon the men to come to the mosque.

While the people were in this dangerous frame of mind, Napoleon left the city, appointing as his deputy General Dupuy, who handled the mobs so tactlessly that they killed him in his own home. When Napoleon returned and appealed to the shaykhs to restore order, they did not even send him a reply. Accordingly, he bombarded the neighborhood of al-Azhar, destroying buildings and causing havoc. Even though the other citizens of the city capitulated, the men at al-Azhar refused to give in, until the French shells fell in the overcrowded courtyard of the mosque, obliging the shaykhs to hang up a flag of truce. The French then sent a battalion of infantry and a squadron of cavalry to occupy al-Azhar. Al-Jabartī has given a vivid description of what that occupation was like.

The troops

Entered al-Jāmī' al-Azhar; men on horseback accompanied by foot soldiers. . . . They occupied the open court and sanctuary, tethering their horses in the rear by the prayer niche. They pillaged the students' quarters and locker rooms, broke the lamps and night lights, and demolished the chests and books of the students and other persons living

1. Jabartī, Part III, p. ii; (*Merveilles*) Tome VI, pp. 23-26. For membership of the *dīwān*, Khaffājī, Vol. I, p. 92. For the account of Napoleon's secretary, see *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* by M. de Bourrienne (Colburn & Bentley, 1831) Vol. I, pp. 126-249.

there. They looted the loggias and stores of utensils, the storerooms and places for safe keeping, the cupboards and lockers. They tore up the books and copies of the Qur'ān throwing them on the ground and trampling on them with their feet and boots. They camped there, using the place as a latrine and urinal; they cleared their noses there, drank whatever there was to drink and broke the drinking vessels, throwing them into the court and nearby places. If anybody opposed them, they stripped him of his robes. Then on Tuesday morning some of them stood by the gateway of the mosque, so that persons coming to pray saw them and hastily withdrew.²

After twenty-four hours a large group of shaykhs went to Napoleon, who agreed to remove his soldiers from the inside of the mosque, but left a guard outside the gateway. In the meantime the people of the quarter fled, as the soldiers came to their houses to loot and kill.

One of the professors of al-Azhar, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sharqāwī, and four of his colleagues were arrested; a fifth was able to escape. Even though Shaykh al-Sādāt and some of his companions boldly went to Napoleon to plead for the release of the prisoners, they were shot at the Citadel, their bodies being thrown into the Nile.

Although the French were able to restore order in Cairo, the rebellion continued in the provinces, where the people destroyed French boats, refused to sell supplies, stopped providing guides and joined the army of the Mamlūk commander, Murād Bāy. In August, moreover, the British fleet commanded by Nelson demolished the French transport and war vessels at Aboukir³ east of Alexandria.

A weaker man than Napoleon might have been discouraged by the loss of his fleet and the failure of his efforts to win the good will of the Egyptians. With his remarkable energy, however, he persuaded the 'ulamā' to issue a proclamation, appealing to the people to be orderly and to pay their taxes, while he sent General Desaix to fight the Mamlūks in the south. He also re-organized the Dīwān and encouraged city planning, bridge building and the construction of hospitals, factories and windmills. The scholars accompanying him published two journals⁴ and

2. Translated from Jabartī, Part III, p. 26; (*Merveilles*) Tome VI, p. 57. Compare Mubārak, Part IV, p. 35; Zaydān, Part II, p. 115.

3. Abū-Qīr.

4. *Le Courrier d'Égypte* and *La Décade Égyptienne*.

interested the Egyptians in the fine arts and archaeology. They also showed their books and scientific instruments to the professors at al-Azhar, astonishing them with their chemical experiments. Scholars like 'Abd-al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī learned a great deal about European science. Shaykh Ḥasan al-'Aṭṭār, the Rector of al-Azhar from about 1830 to 1834, studied enough French to interpret European culture to the Egyptians and, while serving as recorder to the Dīwān, Ismā'il al-Khashshāb encouraged cultural exchange.

In February, 1799, Bonaparte led an army into Palestine, in order to prevent the Ottomans from invading Egypt. When he seized al-'Arīsh he sent some captured flags to Cairo, where the authorities forced the Rector of al-Azhar to fly them from the minarets. Shortly afterward thirteen flags from Jaffa were taken to al-Azhar and hung over two of the gateways.

Bonaparte spent the spring of 1799 trying to drive the Ottomans from the town of 'Akkā across the bay from Mount Carmel, but his efforts were unsuccessful because a British fleet kept the town supplied with provisions, while the Ottomans sent reinforcements. When, therefore, in May 1799 Napoleon was called back to France, he withdrew his forces from Palestine. Before he could depart from Egypt he was obliged to repel a joint European and Turkish attack, but he finally sailed home during the summer of 1799, leaving General Kléber as his deputy in Cairo.

On March 20, 1800, twelve thousand Ottoman troops invaded Egypt, marching on Cairo. Although Kléber defeated them at the Battle of Heliopolis, at least eight thousand of the Turkish soldiers found refuge in the slum districts of Cairo. When the Egyptians in Būlāq helped them to loot the French supply depots, the flame of revolution was kindled in the city as a whole. After ten days of bitter strife the French asked the shaykhs of al-Azhar to help them to negotiate a peace, but the populace refused to come to terms, even cursing the shaykhs. Kléber, therefore, bombarded Būlāq and the neighborhood of al-Azhar for six days and nights, until the people surrendered. Then the French collected large quantities of weapons and imposed such heavy fines on the shaykhs that the guilds of the city were obliged to help meet the demands. When Shaykh al-Sādāt was slow in paying his fine he was put in prison, where he was whipped twice a day.

In the meantime there came to Cairo a former student of al-Azhar named Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī who, after living at al-Azhar for a month, went to the residence of General Kléber and stabbed

him to death. Four Qur'ān reciters of al-Azhar were also implicated. One of them escaped, but after a trial the other three were executed, their heads being exhibited in a public place. At the same time Sulaymān al-Ḥalabī was impaled on a stake, after his hand had been burned.

In order to avoid further incidents, Shaykh al-Sharqāwī closed al-Azhar on June 1, 1800, keeping the gates locked until June 2, 1801, when the French agreed to evacuate the country.

After Kléber's assassination Egypt was ruled by General le Baron de Menou, whose acceptance of Islām did not save him from being extremely unpopular. During his régime a French protectorate over Egypt was announced, heavy taxes were imposed on the people and a number of the leading shaykhs were interned. At the same time the Muslims were shocked by seeing French women unveiled in the streets and enraged when some of their mosques were demolished or used for secular purposes.

During March 1801 a British fleet and Ottoman army jointly invaded Egypt. As General Menou lacked Napoleon's genius, the French were so badly defeated that by the end of October they evacuated. The British fleet did not remain in Egyptian waters for more than a year and a half, as the authorities in London desired to have Egypt return to Ottoman suzerainty. Accordingly, even before the British withdrew, the Sulṭān sent his Grand Vizier from Istanbūl to Cairo, where he re-established Turkish rule and on June 2, 1801, honored al-Azhar by attending a Friday service.

Muḥammad 'Alī

After both the French and British forces had evacuated and the Ottoman flag was once more flying over the Citadel, there was a period of anarchy. The Ottoman pashas were unable to govern the country, while the Mamlūk officers were struggling to regain the power which they had lost to the French.⁵ During this disturbed period people of different types sought the help of al-Azhar. The Commander of the Albanian garrison⁶ gave the students gift of wheat, in order to gain their good will. A group of desperate women rushed into the mosque, where they aired their grievances with such loud voices that they stopped the

5. Jabartī, Part III, p. 260 ff; (*Merveilles*) Tome VII.

6. The Albanian troops came to Egypt in 1801 with the Turkish army of invasion and remained to do garrison duty.

classes. On another occasion two hundred and fifty Janissaries found refuge at al-Azhar, while striking for payment of their wages. In the midst of these chaotic conditions the members of the Albanian garrison appealed to one of their officers to restore order. This new chief was Muḥammad 'Alī, "The man who turned Egypt into a living organism."⁷

As Muḥammad 'Alī was at that time loyal to the Ottoman Sulṭān, he helped a new Pasha to occupy the Citadel at Cairo and all might have gone well, if this Pasha had not brought 3000 Kurdish tribesmen, or *Delīs*, to join his garrison. These *Delī* soldiers proved to be so brutal that they drove the people of the city to desperation.

During May, 1805, the shaykhs dismissed their classes at al-Azhar and went to Muḥammad 'Alī, in order to demand the removal of the Pasha. When Muḥammad 'Alī asked them whom they wished to nominate as the Pasha's successor they replied, "We will have thee to govern us according to the laws; for we see in thy countenance that thou art possessed of justice and goodness."⁸

Although the shaykhs easily persuaded Muḥammad 'Alī to comply with their request, it took him two months to expel the Pasha from the Citadel. During this period of anxiety al-Azhar served as a refuge for hundreds of terrified people. Many of the Mamlūk soldiers refused to submit to a foreign officer like Muḥammad 'Alī. Those of their number who fled to the college-mosque of Barqūq were caught and killed, but all who sought refuge at al-Azhar escaped.

By March 1, 1811, Muḥammad 'Alī had gained such prestige that a large number of the leading Mamlūks accepted his invitation to attend at the Citadel the investiture of his son, Prince Ṭūsūn, as the commander of an army being sent to Arabia. The purpose of this expeditionary force was to help the Ottomans drive out forces of Wahhābī tribesmen from Makkah and al-Madīnah. After drinking coffee together in a friendly way, the Mamlūks suddenly discovered that Muḥammad 'Alī had locked them in the Citadel, where 470 of them were slaughtered. This massacre made Muḥammad 'Alī the undisputed master of Egypt, enabling him to drive out the Mamlūks from the provinces, as well as from the capital.

7. Ghurbāl, p. 15. See also pp. 1-32. The *Delīs* were *al-Dilah* or *al-Dilātiyah*.

8. Enc. Brit. 1949, Vol. VIII, p. 89.

Several incidents occurring at al-Azhar suggest how much lawlessness must have existed during this upset period. In 1810 the students were accused of making false money and of harboring prostitutes, either inside the mosque or in places nearby. Two years later two thieves entered al-Azhar to steal the students' belongings. When they were caught their hands were cut off, in accordance with Sūrah V, verse 41, of the Qur'ān.⁹

While the costly war in Arabia was taking place Muḥammad 'Alī confiscated the property of the country, including the endowments, or *awqāf*, of al-Azhar, proprietors being obliged to accept stipends fixed by the government instead of the revenues from their estates.¹⁰ At the same time such heavy taxes were imposed upon the people that the shaykhs read the traditions of al-Bukhārī¹¹ as a sign of protest. On another occasion al-Bukhārī was read at the request of Muḥammad 'Alī himself. When his son, Tūsūn, died fighting the Wāhhabī in Arabia, he asked the shaykhs to read the traditions about the Prophet, so as to invoke Allāh's favor for his younger son, Ibrāhīm, as he was taking his brother's place.

In addition to the war in Arabia, Muḥammad 'Alī conducted a number of other campaigns. In 1820 he started the conquest of the Sūdān and four years later helped the Ottoman Sultān Maḥmūd II to deal with the Greek revolution. In 1831 a fourth campaign was conducted by Ibrāhīm, his son, to drive the Ottomans out of Palestine and Syria.

Although Muḥammad 'Alī was famous for his military campaigns, it was not so much his foreign wars as his domestic reforms which affected al-Azhar. In spite of his despotic methods, the shaykhs had a share in planning for these measures, as a number of them were invited to meet with his advisory council.

The reform program included the founding of numerous secular schools and technical institutions, as well as the sending of students to Europe for study and the establishment of a printing press. The first group of a hundred young men to enter the new medical school and many candidates for other forms of higher education were recruited from the student body of al-Azhar. After studying in France during the year 1826, Shaykh

9. Mubārak, Part IV, p. 37. Sharqāwī, Part II, pp. 175, 176. Jabartī, Part IV, p. 211; (*Merveilles*) Tome VIII, pp. 229, 245, 324.

10. Lane-Poole (*Story of Cairo*) p. 302. Arminjon, p. 45. Guemard, p. 251. Heyworth-Dunne, p. 103.

11. *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Rifā'ah al-Taḥṭāwī started the School of Languages and Translation Bureau of the government, as well as lectures at al-Azhar to awaken an interest in secular literature.¹² Other shaykhs also began to take an interest in the new ideas, which were forming in Europe during the early years of the nineteenth century.

Muḥammad 'Alī showed a great deal of favor to al-Azhar, but at the same time he dominated the administration. Thus when the 'ulamā' chose Muḥammad al-Mahdī to be the Rector, Muḥammad 'Alī insisted on appointing Muḥammad al-Shanawānī instead.¹³

During the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī a million acres of land were reclaimed for cultivation, the population of Egypt increased from two to four and a half million and the government revenues were almost doubled. Instead of the Ottoman Pasha and his Mamlūk amīrs there was a new dynasty. In the place of mediaeval stagnation and isolation from Europe there was the beginning of a cultural awakening. Side by side with the Quranic system of learning, there was a new program of secular education, destined to compete with the religious studies fostered by al-Azhar.

The Successors of Muḥammad 'Alī

In 1848 Muḥammad 'Alī withdrew in favor of his son, Ibrāhīm Pasha, who died prematurely a few months before his father's own life came to an end. He was followed by 'Abbās Ḥilmī, who ruled from 1848 to 1854 and was so hostile to European influences that he allowed most of the new educational reforms to suffer from neglect. His successor was his uncle Sa'id, whose weak rule came to an end in 1863. Although 'Abbās Ḥilmī frequently visited al-Azhar, where he distributed silver coins, and Sa'id also favored the mosque, their patronage accomplished nothing of importance.

The year after Sa'id died the shaykhs sent a report to the Paris Exposition in which they included the curriculum of al-Azhar. Although logic, arithmetic, algebra, equations, astronomy and astrology were mentioned, it is evident that these subjects were regarded as supplementary courses. The principal studies were still those of the Ottoman times.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, many ascetics continued to frequent al-Azhar and there were also vestiges of

12. Sa'idī, pp. 19-24, 26-32; Adams, p. 29; Ghurbāl, p. 90; Fiqī, pp. 69-79.

13. Sharqāwī, Part III, pp. 177, 178.

the violence which had existed in former times. In 1853 the North African students mutinied because they were discontented with their rations. Order was only restored by the arrival of a patrol of soldiers and the expelling of four students. Shortly afterward the students of Upper Egypt had such a violent altercation with the Syrians, that the troops came with drums and guns. At least three teachers and thirty students were arrested before the quarrel could be ended.¹⁴

In 1855 a drawing was made public, so that for the first time Europeans could learn what the inner courtyard of al-Azhar was like.¹⁵ Another break with tradition was the appointing of four shaykhs to take charge of the mosque, when the Rector broke down in health. This Rector was Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī, who died in 1860 and was so beloved that 'Abbās Ḥilmī himself sometimes attended his lectures.¹⁶

The Land Law of 1858 was important for al-Azhar, as it brought to an end Muḥammad 'Alī's agricultural monopoly, once again permitting institutions to enjoy the income from their endowments. It was about this time that Princess Zaynab, a daughter of Muḥammad 'Alī, and a certain Salīm Pasha established *awqāf*, each of which was destined to yield to al-Azhar about seven thousand Egyptian pounds a year.

In 1856 Sa'īd signed the concession for constructing the Suez Canal, but he died in 1863 before the undertaking was completed, leaving Ismā'il, the son of Ibrāhīm, as his successor.

Ismā'il dreamed of modernizing the social and cultural life of his people, so as to make Egypt like "a corner of Europe." He revived some of the projects started by Muḥammad 'Alī and encouraged the Catholic and Protestant missions to expand their educational programs, giving girls as well as boys a chance to become educated. He also made numerous government reforms, undertook important public works and founded many of the educational and civic institutions which make modern Cairo a center of culture.

One of the new institutions deserves special mention. *Dār al-'Ulūm*¹⁷ was established to train secondary school teachers and to contribute to the education of judges. It was designed to supplement the work at al-Azhar by teaching the traditional subjects

14. Mubārak, Part IV, p. 40; Khaffāji, Vol. I, p. 115; Heyworth-Dunne, p. 398.

15. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 41.

16. Mubārak, Part IV, p. 41; The name is sometimes written al-Bayjūrī.

17. It was founded in 1872 and in 1946 became a college of Cairo University.

in a more vital way, at the same time that modern courses were offered in mathematics, history, geography, physics, chemistry and calligraphy. Even at the present time students of al-Azhar profit by courses at Dār al-'Ulūm, so as to become well trained teachers. They also use the library for study and the preparation of theses.

During the reign of Ismā'il, al-Azhar was a rapidly growing institution, which still served elementary school boys as well as students of university age. In 1867 there were 221 teachers: 101 Shāfi'ī, 42 Ḥanafī, 77 Mālikī and 1 Ḥanbalī. During the same year there were 4,712 students. Six years later in 1873 there were 314 teachers and 9,441 students. The budget, which was met by income from endowments, totaled 2,519 pounds and 62 piasters, which at that time amounted to about \$12,600, the dollar being worth much more than it is today. In 1876 the students were divided among the following codes of jurisprudence: 5,651 Shāfi'ī, 3,826 Mālikī, 1,278 Ḥanafī and 25 Ḥanbalī, a total of 10,780.¹⁸

Ismā'il was greatly interested in al-Azhar. The shaykhs were encouraged to teach geometry, history, music and other subjects as elective courses. The College of Āqbughā was repaired, some arcades on the right-hand side of the sanctuary were rebuilt and the south-east entrance, *Bāb al-Ṣa'ā'idah*, was renovated, a poem being inscribed with gilded letters for people in the street to read.¹⁹

In 1870 Shaykh Muḥammad al-Mahdī became the Rector and, as he was an influential Ḥanafī muftī, he was able to obtain generous gifts so as to improve the financial situation of the mosque. Both Ismā'il and the new Rector realized how unsatisfactory the educational standards were at al-Azhar. There were still no formal diplomas, only the personal certificates²⁰ written by individual teachers. There was, moreover, no system for the appointment of professors, so that classes were often conducted by ambitious shaykhs, who were incapable and lacking in true scholarship.

In order to raise the academic standards, the Law of February 3, 1872 was issued.²¹ This statute inaugurated a new system whereby a candidate, who wished to teach at al-Azhar, was re-

18. 'Abd-al-Rāziq, p. 38; Mubārak, Part I, p. 88; Zayyātī, pp. 204, 205. A student was called *al-mujāwir* or *ṭālib*; plural *al-mujāwirūn* or *al-ṭalabah*.

19. Jundī, p. 21; 'Inān (1958) p. 251; Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 41. Zayyātī, pp. 79, 80.

20. See Appendix III.

21. See *Projet de Réforme* and *Sa'idī*.

quired to apply to the Rector for examination, at the same time proving that he had completed certain required courses. In order to conduct the examinations the authorities established a board, which was composed of two leading scholars from each of the three principal schools of jurisprudence. Not more than six candidates were examined in any one year, usually even a smaller number. The candidate who passed the examinations, which to start with were held in private homes during six or seven days, was granted a diploma²² sanctioned by the ruler himself. The successful candidates were divided into three groups. A man of the first grade was entitled to wear an honorary robe conferred by the ruler and to enjoy free travel in Egypt. He was almost certain to be appointed to teach at al-Azhar rather than in one of the less important institutions. A candidate who was unable to answer questions related to eleven academic departments of study was assigned to a lower grade, but he had a chance to seek re-examination after further study. The eleven academic subjects were the law, the principles or sources of jurisprudence, theology, tradition, commentary, two kinds of grammar, three kinds of rhetoric and logic.²³ This law was important because it was the first of a series of reforms, which turned al-Azhar from a mediaeval mosque-college into a modern university.

Jamāl-al-Dīn al-Afghānī

Although the progressive reforms of Ismā'il influenced the intellectual leaders of Cairo in many ways, the nineteenth century renaissance in Egypt was due not so much to the official actions of Ismā'il as to the personal efforts of Muḥammad Jamāl-al-Dīn al-Afghānī,²⁴ who lived at Cairo from 1871 to 1879, supported by a government grant of ten pounds a month.

Jamāl-al-Dīn al-Afghānī was a political and intellectual rebel, who desired to see Islām liberated from European imperialism, awakened from the stagnation of mediaeval times and unified under one Caliph. Although the more conservative shaykhs and

22. Al-Shahādah al-'Ālimīyah, making the teacher an 'ālim, or member of al-'ulamā'.

23. Al-fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, al-tawḥīd, al-ḥadīth, al-tafsīr, al-naḥw & al-ṣarf, al-ma'ānī & al-bayān & al-badī', and al-mantiq.

24. Born in 1839, studied in Afghanistan, Persia and India; 1866-1869 served as vizier in Afghanistan; lived in Cairo; travelled; 1882-1884 at Paris; further travel; died at Istanbul, 1897. See Makhzūmī, Madkūr, Amīn (*Moslem Phil.*) pp. 57-71; Bahay (*Fikr*) pp. 47-87; Adams, pp. 4-17.

pupils at al-Azhar feared his radical spirit, many students flocked to his house in order to hear his lectures and to ask questions. Owing to the innovations of Ismā'il, these students were puzzled by European thought. They liked al-Afghānī because he based his statements on reason in addition to revelation. He encouraged the students to think for themselves, rather than to be guided by blind imitation of the old authorities,²⁵ giving religion new vitality and life new meaning. Although most of the things which al-Afghānī taught are of too technical a nature for persons who do not know Arabic to appreciate, two aspects of his teachings are of general interest.

In the first place, he emphasized the fact that the Prophet Muḥammad not only revealed truths to awaken men's spiritual powers, but also to establish a new social order of freedom, justice and brotherhood. It was this welding together of spiritual vitality and social welfare which formed a religious basis for al-Afghānī's program of revolution.²⁶ According to him it was the duty of a loyal Muslim to serve Allāh by freeing Islām from what he believed to be the coercion and exploitation of the colonial system. It is impossible to understand the present day situation in Asia and Africa, unless one realizes that the seed planted by al-Afghānī has grown to bear fruit a hundredfold.

A second aspect of his teaching was his effort to harmonize science and religion. When for instance the students asked him why the Qur'ān did not mention modern inventions, he explained that if the miracles of steam and electricity had been revealed to a Bedouin of the seventh century, he would have thought that Allāh was telling lies. Then again when the students asked him if it was really true that the earth was a sphere encircling the sun, he found the answer in the Qur'ān itself. Surah lxxix, verse 30, says about the creation of the universe that "The earth, moreover, hath He spread out." As the basic form of the verb to "spread out" means "egg shaped," al-Afghānī explained that the Qur'ān implies that Allāh created the earth in global form. Surah xxxvi, verse 38, gives further proof when it says, "And the sun runs its course." Al-Afghānī pointed out that the two final words imply "as its pivot," so that the Qur'ān makes it clear that Allāh created a round earth to circle about the sun.²⁷

25. al-taqlīd.

26. See Madkūr, pp. 102-104, 147.

27. Makhzūmī, pp. 161, 164-166.

Although this type of exegesis may seem to be lacking in scholarship, the spirit which prompted it was full of initiative. At a time when the first waves of modernism were beating upon a hard beach of conservatism, the courageous ideas of al-Afghānī made a strong appeal to the perplexed youth. When, moreover, the European Powers were interfering with Egyptian affairs, his dream of political independence aroused the young Muslims, who desired to see Islām regain its former freedom and supremacy. Al-Afghānī was not content to be a teacher, but also took a great deal of interest in Free Masonry and started a political party of his own, called *al-Hizb al-Waṭanī*, aiming to achieve freedom and justice.

The foreign diplomats inevitably disliked al-Afghānī's opposition to imperialism. The shaykhs of al-Azhar also were hostile to him for three principal reasons: he taught European philosophy; he refused to be bound down by customs, which had become traditional in Islām; and he allowed some of his disciples to neglect religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1879 he was expelled from Egypt. After visiting Hyderabad in India and London in England, he went to Paris, where he lived from 1882 to 1884.

During this period he organized a revolutionary society called *Jam'iyat al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, most of the members of which were Muslims working in France. The aim of the society was to combat imperialism, especially in Egypt and the Sūdān. Between March 13th and October 16th, 1884, al-Afghānī issued a periodical with the same name as the society. He brought his disciple Muḥammad 'Abduh to Paris, to write most of the articles, which dealt with subjects like British imperialism in the Nile Valley, the people of India, the Ottomans and the French colonies. There were also appeals for Muslim unity and discussions about more detailed subjects. The last article to be published concerned "British Earthquakes in the Sūdān." Although the journal was banned in Egypt, many copies found their way to Cairo, where they aroused the emotions of members of the younger generation. When the journal was banned in India, it was discontinued.

Jamāl-al-Dīn al-Afghānī left France to travel to numerous places, before he finally settled down at Istanbūl. Although the Sulṭān 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd offered to send him a concubine, he refused her as he was a celibate with ascetic ideas. After three operations for cancer he died at Istanbūl when he was fifty-eight years old. His active life was largely responsible for Egyptian

nationalism, the Persian constitution of 1906, the Young Turk Party and the renaissance of Islām.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm said about al-Afghānī that "Before his time people thought that religion was a matter of form, everything with meaning being heresy. This lasted until he made them to see the light of true guidance, so that due to him they emerged from the darkness of the Middle Ages."²⁸ It was also said about al-Afghānī that "He awakened a spirit of revival among the scholars of al-Azhar, so that there flowed in their veins the blood of a new life. It was a religious renaissance, which al-Azhar embraced, following its guidance and seeking its light until our own time."²⁹

The British Occupation

While this intellectual awakening was taking place, important events were creating a crisis in Egypt. In November 1869 the Suez Canal was opened to traffic with elaborate ceremonies. Because of the extravagant promises made by his predecessor, Ismā'il was obliged to incur heavy debts, in order to complete the construction of the Canal. In 1873 his debts were increased, as he spent large sums of money at Istanbūl to persuade the Ottoman government to grant him a greater degree of autonomy and the right to use the title Khedive.³⁰ Ismā'il also carried on a war in the Sūdān and spent 46,264,000 pounds sterling for a program of public works, with the result that he was obliged to borrow large sums of money from the European bankers, becoming indebted to the Oppenheim Bank alone for 43,890,000 pounds.

By 1876 it became so evident that Ismā'il would be bankrupt, unless his finances were controlled by European experts, that drastic measures were adopted to satisfy his creditors, while he himself tried to form a council of ministers, with the power to improve methods of taxation and finance. Unfortunately, however, the demands of his army officers and disagreements with the foreign financiers made his position untenable. When, therefore, the British and French advised him to withdraw and the Ottoman Sulṭān ordered him to abdicate in favor of his son, the Khedive yielded. In June 1879 the ill-fated Ismā'il sailed from

28. Free translation from Madkūr, p. 102.

29. *Ibid.*; p. 104.

30. From the Persian *khudaywī* (seigneur).

Alexandria on his yacht *al-Mahrūsah*, leaving his son, Tawfīq, as the ruler of Egypt. It must have been a bitter experience for the students of al-Azhar, fired by al-Afghānī's dreams of independence, to see their monarch forced into exile by a despotic Sultān and a group of European creditors.

The Khedive Tawfīq went a step further than his father by establishing an International Commission of Liquidation, hoping that it could recommend a final solution for the problem of the Egyptian debt. Although this Commission proposed realistic methods of handling the budget, interest payments and taxation, its work was upset by unexpected events.

In 1881 the Egyptian army officers became exasperated because the size of the army was being reduced, their pay was inadequate and their Turkish colleagues were favored more than they were. Accordingly, two colonels named Aḥmad al-'Arābī and 'Alī Fahmī presented a petition to the Prime Minister, asking for fairer treatment. When they were placed under arrest, the Egyptian officers mutinied, order being restored only when the Khedive appointed Aḥmad al-'Arābī as Minister of War, increased the size of the army and granted higher salaries to the Egyptians. At the same time forty Turkish speaking officers were sent into exile. Needless to say these actions angered both the Ottomans and the European financiers. The Egyptians also were stirred up, as the following quotation from a local newspaper makes clear.

Some people pretend that fanaticism is ruinous to progress, yet our best days were those in which we conquered the Universe by devotion to our faith. Today we have neglected it, and we and our country are in the hands of strangers, but our misfortunes are a just punishment for our sins. O ye Ulema of El-Azhar! whose sacred duty it should be to combat this religious decadence, what will be your answer at the Day of Judgment to Him who can read the secrets of your hearts?³¹

These words were not fair to the shaykhs of al-Azhar, who were ringleaders in promoting nationalism. When, for instance, the Council of Ministers resigned under foreign pressure, a British fleet appearing at Alexandria, it was the shaykhs who took the lead in persuading the Khedive to reinstate al-'Arābī as a minister.

31. Cromer (*Mod. Egypt*) p. 211.

When a Maltese sailor stabbed a donkey boy in Alexandria, on June 11, 1882, the strained condition reached a climax. The slum dwellers of different nationalities became engaged in such a violent fracas that fifty Europeans were killed. Fourteen thousand Christians fled from Egypt and the Powers held a conference at Istanbul to discuss the crisis. When, acting independently of the Europeans, the Khedive appointed Rāghib as Prime Minister and al-'Arābī as Minister of War, the British fleet at Alexandria issued an ultimatum. As the Egyptians disregarded this warning, the British shelled their fortifications. The following day the Egyptian garrison withdrew after setting fire to the city, while a few British went ashore to keep order.

After it had become evident that Turkey and France did not wish to share in an invasion of Egypt, the British independently of their allies landed an army at Alexandria and on September 13, 1882 defeated al-'Arābī at Tall al-Kabīr, the following day occupying Cairo.

In writing about these events Lord Cromer said that the 'ulamā' "Though numerically the smallest, was by far the most influential"³² of the groups forming public opinion among the Egyptians. In spite of their efforts, however, the shaykhs became the subjects of a foreign régime and al-Azhar was destined to exist in a land controlled by foreigners and unbelievers.

32. Cromer (*Mod. Egypt*) p. 325.

The Modern Period

1879-1892 Khedive Tawfiq

1882—British occupation.

1888-1889—College of Āqbughā rebuilt.

Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh, Grand Muftī of Egypt.

1892—Renovation of al-Azhar.

1892-1914 Khedive ‘Abbās Ḥilmī II

1895-1896—Laws for reforms at al-Azhar.

1896-1897—Extensive improvements; the Library of al-Azhar founded.

1901—al-Riwāq al-‘Abbāsī built.

1903—Completion of the Aswān Dam.

1911—Law for the reorganization of al-Azhar.

1914—Beginning of the First World War.

1914-1917 Sultān Ḥusayn Kāmīl

The British Protectorate replaced Ottoman suzerainty.

1917-1936 Fu’ād I

1919—Widespread disturbances in Egypt.

1922—Egypt became an independent kingdom.

1930-1936—Laws to establish al-Azhar as a university.

1936—Construction of buildings used for Administration, the Religious Institute, Hospital and Clinic.

1936—1952 King Fārūq

1939-1945—The Second World War.

1950-1951—The University quadrangle built for al-Azhar.

1952 The Revolution

1952—Abdication of Fārūq.

1953—The Republic established.

1959—City of Foreign Students completed.

Reconstruction and Reform

Improvement of the Building

AT THE time when the British occupied Egypt, the nominal sovereign was the Ottoman Sultān, to whom annual tribute was still paid. His viceroy in Cairo was the Khedive, who was assisted by a number of national and provincial councils. The Khedive Tawfiq "Gave the English complete liberty, accepting all of the reforms which they introduced. Their task in Egypt was greatly facilitated by the conciliatory and trustful character of the Prince."¹

The power behind the throne, therefore, came to be the British agent, Sir Evelyn Baring, who presided over the affairs of Egypt from 1882 to 1907, ending his career as the Earl of Cromer. As the British ambassador was at the capital, Istanbūl, Cromer's diplomatic rank was that of Consul General. His difficult task was made easier when representatives of the European Powers met at London in 1884 and approved a plan for liquidating the Egyptian debts.² Under these favorable conditions Lord Cromer was able to make Egypt not only a solvent, but even a prosperous, country.

In 1892 the Khedive 'Abbās Ḥilmī II succeeded Tawfiq. The most important events which occurred during his reign were the conquest of the Sūdān by Kitchener in 1898, the completion in 1903 of the Aswān Dam, with its supplementary barrages at Asyūt and Ziftah, and the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, giving France a dominant position in Morocco, while England gained a free hand in Egypt.

It is so expensive to keep large public buildings in good repair, that it is not surprising that many of them were neglected during the period when Egypt was not only in debt, but also passing through a critical phase of political upheaval. When

1. Translated from Shafiq, p. 158.

2. Approval was given for a loan of a million pounds; use of the loan to pay indemnities, pensions, privileged debts, etc., and also to develop irrigation.

Tawfiq first became the Khedive, al-Azhar itself needed renovation. In a report of the Comité de Conservation for the year 1883, Professor Creswell found the following note.

"Although a considerable amount of work was done in this mosque, it was hardly noticeable because of the size of the building. The principal parts of the edifice are propped up and need reconstruction." Professor Creswell also records that "A photograph in my collection, taken by Giuntini early in the eighties of the last century, shows the north-west façade of the ṣaḥn³ so shored up and, in addition, the space between the columns walled up, only the outer half of each column being visible."⁴

'Alī Mubārak, moreover, said about the College of Āqbughā that "It remained intact until the Dīwān al-Awqāf tore it down and began to reconstruct it in its own way, the work not yet being completed."⁵ This must have been written about 1888 or 1889, while the outer walls of the north-east and north-west façades of the College and the roof with its supporting piers were being rebuilt.

The Khedive Tawfiq also made over most of the wooden screens, originally installed by Qā'it-Bāy to separate the sanctuary from the side colonnades. Fortunately the repairs did not change the beautiful appearance of the original Mamlūk woodwork. About the same time the Khedive rebuilt the arcades of Katkhudā's new sanctuary and reconstructed the outer walls of the shops, located between the sanctuary and the street in the rear.

When 'Abbās Ḥilmī II became the Khedive in 1892, he visited al-Azhar to inspect some important building operations. It was at the time when the piers and columns around the open courtyard were rebuilt in their present form. Only the porch of the Caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ was left without radical changes. The main lavatory was also improved, while the street walls of the lodgings on the south side of the mosque were reconstructed. Four years later work was begun for the removal of the shops, latrines and storerooms, which spoiled the appearance of the west corner of the mosque. A schoolroom over the main gateway was also torn down, the roof level on the left hand side of the façade was made even and, a year later, the red checker pattern on the gateway of Qā'it-Bāy was removed.

3. The central court, open to the sky.

4. Creswell (*Egypt*) Vol. I, p. 41.

5. Mubārak, Part II, p. 91, line 11.

In 1901 the Khedive 'Abbās Hilmī completed the construction of a handsome new building in the west corner of the mosque enclosure. It is three stories high and known as *al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī*. On the ground floor there is a beautiful room, which was originally used for examinations, as well as for the classes of prominent teachers like Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh and the Rector. The upper stories have been used for offices and lodgings. A number of new rooms were also added to the College of Taybars, with a passage to separate them from the Riwāq al-'Abbāsī and with a small gateway opening out to the front street. Most of the roofing over the principal parts of the mosque was also made over at this time.⁶

Other improvements were made in connection with sanitation.⁷ The courts and loggias had become unhealthy, with the floors unswept, bits of food left to rot, water spilt on the ground, dirty clothing strewn around, overcrowding at night, a clutter of chests and lockers, disagreeable odors and a plague of mice. As the students and even the teachers did not appreciate the danger from infection, there were always many skin diseases and epidemics were likely to occur. In 1896, for instance, the authorities came to remove a Syrian student, reported to be ill either with cholera or the bubonic plague. Because his roommates refused to let him go to the hospital, there was a fight with the police, which resulted in five deaths, a hundred and five arrests and the closing of the Syrian lodgings for a year.

In 1898 a doctor was appointed to take charge of the students' health. He limited the number of boys sleeping in any one place, demanded greater cleanliness, established a clinic and dispensary in the Riwāq al-'Abbāsī and removed boys with infectious diseases from the mosque. In 1904 a government hospital was built near al-Azhar, but the present system of health service was not organized until 1929.

In the meantime the dole of bread was increased from five to fifteen thousand loaves a day. At the beginning of the twentieth century the bread was distributed between dawn and ten o'clock on the left hand side of the open court, but in the course of time it was moved to a building behind the mosque. Every student eligible to enjoy the dole received his bread from a representative of his *riwāq*. At this period a needy student

6. For comparison of plans see Baedeker (1898) p. 44 and (1908) p. 52. See Creswell (*Egypt*) pp. 41-48, 58, 254-257 and plates 4-14.

7. Khaffājī, Vol. I, p. 115; Majlis, pp. 106-109; Zayyātī, pp. 194-196.

usually received four loaves a day, two of which he ate, the other two being sold. The shaykhs preferred to give bread rather than cash, to prevent a shiftless student from spending his money too quickly and going hungry. In 1929, however, the dole of bread was replaced by a modern system of semiannual payments.

Another improvement was the establishment of a central university library. In 1853 the government department of endowments⁸ made a catalogue of the books in the different institutions of Cairo. It recorded that there were 18,564 books and manuscripts at al-Azhar, but these volumes were distributed among the lodging quarters and badly neglected. There were also some valuable manuscripts stored in the nearby mosques, where there were no intelligent guardians to take care of them. Accordingly, in 1896 and 1897, the Rector persuaded the government to furnish the colleges of Āqbughā and Ṭaybars with bookcases and steps were taken to form a central university library.⁹

At the beginning there were 7,703 volumes, representing twenty-seven branches of learning, 6,617 of the books being given by the lodging units and neighboring institutions. Although some of the large residential units were slow about turning over their books to this new library, the librarian was given supervision over all of the books in the mosque as a whole. In 1909 a committee was appointed to purchase new books and, even though this body was slow in performing its duty, the library grew because of private gifts.

Although a few other improvements have been made, such as the installation of electric lights and modern plumbing, the mosque building has not been changed in any important way since the beginning of the twentieth century. The new buildings erected since that time are outside of the original enclosure, so that they do not affect the mosque itself.

Persons who wish to study the art and architecture of al-Azhar should refer to the detailed and masterful description given by Professor Creswell in the first volume of his monumental work on the Muslim architecture of Egypt.¹⁰

8. *Dīwān al-Awqāf*.

9. *Maktabat al-Azhar*.

10. *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* by K. A. C. Creswell, Clarendon Press, 1952. See also Hautcoeur, Vol. I, pp. 218-220; Vol. II, *planches* 9-15, 91, 105, 106, 236, 237; *Mosques of Egypt*, Vol. I, pp. 16-20 and plates 10-13; Vol. II, plates 163, 164.

Muḥammad 'Abduh

At the same time that the material plant of al-Azhar was being renovated, important changes were being made in connection with the academic work. These reforms were due largely to Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh, whose life casts great light on the conditions at al-Azhar.¹¹

He was born in 1849 and, after learning how to read and write in his own home, he went to a village teacher who helped him to memorize the entire Qur'ān before he was eleven years old. In 1862 he was sent to the Aḥmadī Mosque at Ṭanṭā, where for two years he studied the reading and intoning of the Qur'ān. When he was promoted to study grammar, he found the subject to be so unprofitable that he ran away from school. Although his father tried to force him to return, he fled to a nearby village where he spent a fortnight with his father's uncle. This relative, Shaykh Darwīsh Khaḍr, was both a farmer and a Ṣūfī. With his interest in mysticism he gave Muḥammad a spiritual outlook, persuading him to complete his studies so as to gain a better understanding of society. Accordingly, after entrusting to his parents the girl whom he married when he was sixteen years old, he returned to school at Ṭanṭā.

In 1866 he transferred to al-Azhar, where he disliked the pedantic fundamentalism of the period, preferring instead the ideas of a group of ascetics. When, however, he visited his great-uncle again in 1871, he was weaned away from his over zealous asceticism and given an interest in serving his fellowmen. During the same year he became a disciple of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, who helped him to understand both the value of traditional Islām and the significance of modern science. He also kindled in the heart of the young Muḥammad such an infectious enthusiasm, that Muḥammad 'Abduh started to write articles for the press.

His first article, entitled *Risālat al-Wāridāt*, greatly displeased the shaykhs when it appeared in 1874, because it criticized certain aspects of the traditional system. Other incidents increased the ill will of his professors so much, that they only allowed him to pass his examinations because of the Rector's intervention, even then rating him as second grade, when he deserved the first.

After gaining the 'Ālimīyah diploma in 1877, he lectured on

11. For the life of Muḥammad 'Abduh see bibliography: Riḍā, Bahay (*Fikr*), Amin (Osman), 'Abduh, Adams. His home was Maḥallat Naṣr in the Buḥayrah Province; his great-uncle lived at Kunayyisat Awrīn.

theology, logic and ethics at al-Azhar, at the same time giving private lessons in his own home as well as courses in several of the government schools. He also joined the Masonic Lodge of the Eastern Star, taking an interest in the social and civic problems of the disturbed period in which he lived.

In 1879, when Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī was expelled from the country, he said "I have left you Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh. His wisdom will suffice for Egypt."¹²

Although, because of his intimacy with al-Afghānī, he was for a time interned in his village, it was not long before Muḥammad 'Abduh was appointed by the Prime Minister, Riḡād Pasha, to take charge of the government publications, including the official journal¹³ distributed throughout the country as a whole. It was something new for Egypt to see a shaykh of al-Azhar, with his flowing robes and white turban, encouraging reform movements in education, justice, irrigation and other fields of work. In speaking about him Shaykh Rashīd Riḡā said "What a turban it was, ennobled by the head of its wearer, envied by the 'fezzes' and respected by the hats."¹⁴

Although Muḥammad 'Abduh tried to carry out his reforms by peaceful rather than revolutionary means, he was exiled from Egypt when the British occupation took place. In 1882, therefore, after visiting Beirut he went to Paris, to help Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī edit his journal, *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*. While living in France he dispensed with some of his Oriental robes, wearing a fez instead of a turban.

In 1885 he once more visited Beirut, where he taught the Muslim sciences in the Sulṭānīyah School of the government, using his spare time to write a number of important works. Finally, in 1888, he returned to his homeland, where he was appointed to be a judge, serving first in the provinces and later in Cairo. The following year he was made a member of the National Legislative Council and promoted to become Grand Muftī of Egypt.

Some of his judicial decisions made him famous throughout the Muslim world. One of them declared that it was lawful for "Muslims to deposit their money in the Postal Savings Bank, where it would draw interest." Another made it "lawful for Muslims to eat the flesh of animals slain by Jews and Christians"

12. Amīn (*Md. 'Abduh*) p. 17.

13. *Al-Waqā'i' al-Misriyah*.

14. Amīn (*Md. 'Abduh*) p. 32.

and a third ruled that pictures and statues might be used where there was no danger of idolatry.¹⁵ Because of his companionship with Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and his contacts with progressive European culture, he realized that Muslim scholars must become awakened, not only in Egypt, but in the world of Islām as a whole. Thus he became the "religious renewer" of his century, influencing the believers in many Muslim lands.

Because he felt that it was the center from which ideas must radiate to reform Islām, Muḥammad 'Abduh was especially interested in al-Azhar. His plans for developing the institution were thoroughly practical. In the first place, he wished to have a fixed schedule of courses to replace the haphazard classes of individual teachers. In the second place, he felt that there should be annual examinations for all courses, so as to maintain proper academic standards. Thirdly, he believed that the students should be made to use the great original texts of the famous scholars of Islām, rather than secondhand explanations written by less capable teachers. A fourth means of reform was to enrich the curriculum with new subjects, even if they were modern and secular. Fifthly, he felt the need for the centralized library, to take the place of the collections of books in the residential units. Finally, he insisted that the sanitary conditions of the mosque be improved.

In spite of his government duties, Muḥammad 'Abduh found the time to lecture at al-Azhar, where he set an example of teaching with a thorough knowledge of his subject, sympathy for the students and an interpretation of the Qur'ān suited to modern life. He used some of the methods al-Afghānī had used, in order to help his students to accept the discoveries of Pasteur and Darwin. Thus he quoted Sūrah CV, verse 3 of the Qur'ān to confirm the theory of bacteria. When the people of Southern Arabia attacked Makkah during the sixth century, Allāh "sent down upon them flights of *abābil*." Commentators have never been able to decide what these *abābil* were, so that it was possible for Muḥammad 'Abduh to explain that they must have been germs.

In Sūrah II, verse 30, it is told that "Your Lord said to the angels that 'I am making on earth a successor'." Muḥammad 'Abduh pointed out that the "successor" was man who was the descendant of the apes. Thus Allāh confirmed the theories of bacteria and evolution, when He revealed the Qur'ān.¹⁶

15. Adams, pp. 80, 193.

16. Information given by Shaykh Aḥmad al-Maḥmaṣānī, who was a pupil of Muḥammad 'Abduh.

At the same time that Muḥammad ‘Abduh helped the students to solve the problems of modern scientific thought, he wrote his theological treatise, *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, and other essays, in order to arouse a more vital faith in the fundamental beliefs of Islām. He also planned to establish a national university, but he died in 1905 before this dream could come true. His heroic influence was felt from Morocco to Indonesia and, because of his courageous leadership, al-Azhar was awakened to face the problems of modern life.

Academic Reforms

It has already been mentioned that the first law for the reform of al-Azhar¹⁷ was passed in 1872, when an examination system was established to control the appointment of teachers. The law of March 24, 1885 confirmed the examination system with a few minor changes, while the law of October 15 of the same year established a formal system of registration in each residential unit, stricter than that of former years. The new student was not eligible to receive the ration of bread until he had completed studying two books on jurisprudence and two secular courses, during two years of study. Attendance was, therefore, to be accurately recorded, it being understood that "A person who is not registered as belonging to a *riwāq* or *ḥārah* is not to be counted as a student of al-Azhar."

Three years later the law of January 19, 1888, re-affirmed the rules for the examination system, which were evidently difficult to enforce before the end of the nineteenth century.

During the year 1888, moreover, so many people desired to have modern subjects included in the curriculum, that they asked the Rector of al-Azhar to give a legal decision concerning the matter. After consulting the Muftī and other authorities he pronounced that, "It is right to teach the mathematical sciences like arithmetic and geometry, as well as geography, because they do not contradict truth. Anything contributed by them to spiritual endeavor is needed, just as medicine is necessary." Then a refer-

17. For the reform laws see *Projet de Réforme*, pp. 9-32 and 219-316. Sa‘īdī, pp. 34-65, 86-89, 103-110, 121-126, 132-133, *Zawāhirī* (Muḥammad) pp. 257-288 and 289-299, for laws of 1930 and 1933. *Raḡm 40 li-Sanat* 1956, for laws from 1936-1956. Bercher for laws of 1930. *Réorganisation* for law of 1936. See also *Enc. Isl.* (1958) Vol. I, pp. 817-818, and other works in the bibliography.

ence is made to al-Ghazzālī, after which it is explained that certain aspects of astronomy and astrology are not legitimate. The natural sciences are permitted, if studied in accordance with the (*Sharī'ah*) law, but forbidden if approached from the point of view of metaphysics. Alchemy is prohibited, but chemical experiments are allowed, provided they do not contradict the doctrines of Islām.¹⁸

In spite of this decision, such new courses as were introduced were regarded as of secondary importance to the traditional ones, while many ancient textbooks were still retained. A book written by al-Jabartī during the eighteenth century was used for astronomy, the text for mathematics was one composed by ibn-Haytham who died in 1039, and similar books were used for other courses. The philosophy of history,¹⁹ however, written by ibn-Khaldūn during the fourteenth century, was outlawed even though Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh urged that it should be used.

The curriculum, moreover, omitted subjects like the biography of the Prophet, religious ethics, technical terms for the traditions, calligraphy, composition, the art of debate and calculation of the times of worship. The shaykhs believed that a student's mind could be so well trained by mastering the traditional studies, that when he graduated he would be fit for any position to which he might be appointed.

About this same time the Rector moved his office from his private home to some rooms at the mosque.²⁰ The organization of al-Azhar was, however, still unsatisfactory. The professors did not have a reasonable share in the administration and were very much underpaid. In 1892 the budget was only 4,378 pounds.²¹ A professor of the first grade received 150 piasters a month, a man of the second grade 100 and a teacher of the third grade 75. As the number of salaries was limited and there was no system of retirement allowances, a new teacher was obliged to receive a ration of bread instead of money, until the death of an older colleague caused a vacancy. It was, therefore, a common practice for a teacher to leave his family in his village, or to try to earn

18. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Imbābī was the Rector who gave the decision. See Sa'idī, pp. 40-43. Yūnus, pp. 80-82. Wāfī, pp. 28-30. For the supplementary *fatwā* of Muḥammad al-Bannā, see Bayram, pp. 27-29.

19. *Al-Muqaddimah*.

20. Yūnus, p. 100.

21. The pound was worth a little less than \$5.00 and the piaster something less than five cents.

extra pay by private teaching, directing pious foundations and other forms of work.

There was also a lack of system about wearing academic robes. At the beginning of the century, when the shaykhs paid their respects to Muḥammad 'Alī on the first day of the Ramaḍān feast, he was accustomed to invest them with robes of honor without distinction of rank. Even after Muḥammad 'Alī's death, nothing was done to control the use of the academic gowns, which the professors took pride in displaying at public ceremonies.

At the end of the nineteenth century a number of laws were passed to improve these unsatisfactory conditions, the reforms being chiefly due to Muḥammad 'Abduh and the Rector, Shaykh Ḥassūnah al-Nawāwī.

The law of January 3, 1895, established an Administrative Council called in Arabic *Majlis al-Idārah*. The charter members were shaykhs of al-Azhar representing the four codes of Sunnite jurisprudence and two government employees.²² The purpose of this council was to make the administration of al-Azhar more democratic than it had been in the past, when the Rector did not always share his responsibilities with his colleagues.

A law passed on January 17, 1895, only re-affirmed the rules for examinations without real changes, but the law of June 29th of the same year marked an important step forward. It was decided that honoraria paid annually should be assigned to the senior professors in the following way: 12 pounds to each of ten professors, 15 to five, 18 to four, 21 to six, 24 to eight, 27 to three and 30 pounds 867 piasters to each of two, one of them being the Rector. In addition to these annual honoraria for special persons, it was also agreed that members of the faculty as a whole should receive the following monthly stipends: an older man, who taught at al-Azhar before the examination system of 1872 was adopted, was entitled to 3 pounds a month if he belonged to the first grade, 2 pounds if he was of the second grade and 1 pound if he classified as third grade. The monthly stipends assigned to younger men, appointed after 1872 were 1½ pounds for the first grade, 1 for the second and ¾ for the third. Limits were fixed for persons receiving both the annual honoraria and

22. The shaykhs of al-Azhar were Ḥassūnah al-Nawāwī (Ḥanafī), Salīm al-Bishrī (Mālikī), Ḥasan al-Marṣāfī (Shāfi'ī), and Yūsuf al-Nābulī (Ḥanbalī). The officials were Muḥammad 'Abduh and 'Abd-al-Karīm Salmān. Compare *Projet de Réforme*, p. 234.

the monthly stipend. Details were also determined for the transfer of the monthly payments to heirs in case of death. Although the remuneration system instituted by this law seems to be a very inadequate one, it is well to remember that money was worth a great deal more in 1895 than it is today.

A number of enactments passed about this time gave to al-Azhar the nation-wide influence which it still exerts. The mosque schools at Ṭanṭā, al-Dissūq and Dimyāṭ (Damietta) were placed under the control of al-Azhar.

The law of February 1, 1896, adopted the following procedure for the wearing of academic gowns: fifteen shaykhs were eligible to wear the robe of the first rank, thirty-five that of the second rank and fifty the robe of the third rank. The robes were adorned with purple, bordered with yellow ribbon.

The law of July 1, 1896, was an important one, although many of its actions have been modified since it was promulgated. Confirmation was given to the position of the Rector as chairman of the Administrative Council and executive head of al-Azhar, with its affiliated schools. The organization of the Administrative Council with its fortnightly meetings was also confirmed. Furthermore, it was stipulated that, in order to be eligible to become a pupil of al-Azhar, a boy must be fifteen years old and able to memorize at least half of the Qur'ān, as well as to read and write. A blind boy was of course unable to read, but he was expected to learn the entire Qur'ān by heart.

This same law divided the courses of study into the following categories. In the first place there were the Objects of Study, or *al-maqāsid*, which included theology, religious ethics, legal studies, the origins of the law, commentary and tradition. The second category was the Means of Study, or *al-wasā'il*, including the two kinds of grammar called *al-naḥw* and *al-ṣarf*, the three kinds of rhetoric known as *al-ma'ānī*, *al-bayān* and *al-badī'*, logic, the technical terms of tradition called *muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*, arithmetic, algebra, prosody, or *al-'arūd*, and rhyme known as *al-qawāfī*. Students were also entitled to study other courses, such as Islamic history, composition, elocution, language and literature, and elementary geometry.

During the first four years of study a student was prevented from using glosses, or *al-taqārīr*, and explanatory notes called *al-ḥawāshī*. The latter were permissible at the end of the four years, but use of the glosses required the permission of the Administrative Council. This rule was evidently made because these

notes confused immature students, sometimes even filling their minds with heretical ideas.

Holidays were established to honor the two great feasts of Ramaḍān and the Sacrifice,²³ as well as the birthdays of three holy men: the Prophet Muḥammad, his grandson al-Ḥusayn, and the Egyptian saint Aḥmad al-Badawī. There were also holidays for the Nile flood and the departure of the *Maḥmal*²⁴ for Makkah.

The law of 1896 also instituted a new examination, to be given after eight years of study and the completion of eight courses. The Rector and three professors formed the examining committee. A student who passed was awarded a certificate of aptitude called *al-shahādah al-ahlīyah*, which entitled him to become the *imām* or *khaṭīb*, that is, the leader or preacher of a mosque. The old examination for the higher diploma, known as *al-shahādah al-‘ālimīyah*, was retained without important changes. As this diploma was granted only to a man who had studied for twelve years at al-Azhar, a scholar who obtained it was about the age of a modern student to whom the Ph.D. degree is awarded.

The law also adopted rules and penalties to make the discipline stricter, as well as bylaws to determine the relationship between al-Azhar and its affiliated schools.

In 1897 the *Dīwān al-Awqāf*, or government department to control pious foundations, approved the forming of the central library for al-Azhar, assigning for the project the beautiful old college buildings built by Ṭaybars and Āqbughā on the right and left hand sides of the main gateway of the mosque. Some budget figures taken from the minutes of the Administrative Council²⁵ indicate how extra appropriations were approved, so as to make it possible to carry out the reforms of the laws of 1895 and 1896 and the forming of the central library.

These figures show that there was an effort to interest the students in subjects of a modern type by means of financial inducements. One result of these reforms was an increase in the number of students who passed the examinations. In 1896 only

23. *‘Id al-Fiṭr* was at the end of the fast. *‘Id al-Aḍḥā* or *Kurbān Bayrām* was at the end of the pilgrimage.

24. Cloth cover for the Ka’bah sent to Makkah from Egypt; it is more correct to spell the word *maḥmil*.

25. *Majlis al-Idārah*, p. 16, 20-32.

*Egyptian
pounds*²⁶

Revenues from <i>Dīwān al-Awqāf</i> for the affiliated schools at Ṭanṭā, Dissūq, Damietta and also Alexandria		5,016
Appropriation of the Ministry of Finance for salaries		2,000
Extra disbursements of the <i>Dīwān al-Awqāf</i> to implement the law of 1896, providing for:		
The salary increases for 24 teachers	600	
Prizes for students	600	
Salary increases for extra supervision	600	
Student aid to encourage study of mathematics and history	600	
Calligraphy and penmanship	360	
General administration	150	
The new central library	462	3,372
	—	—
		10,388

one passed, whereas in 1904 some sixty-eight attempted the examination and thirty-four were successful.

Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Because of these reforms, conditions were somewhat improved at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1902 only 59 of the teachers did not have diplomas, 251 others having passed examinations and received academic rank. Seventy-four of these men held diplomas of the first grade, which permitted them to teach difficult subjects in the way that they wished. Seventy-four others belonged to the second grade, being allowed to handle subjects of medium difficulty. One hundred and three held diplomas of the third grade and taught less advanced classes. There were also 20 extra teachers assigned to courses like geography, arithmetic and composition. One hundred of the professors belonged to the Shāfi'ī code of jurisprudence, 77 to the Mālikī, 72 to the Ḥanafī and two to the Ḥanbalī.

As the budget had increased to 14,000 pounds a year, the leading shaykhs were better paid than in the past. The Rector

26. At the end of the century the pound was worth a little less than five American dollars.

received 71 pounds a month, in addition to the income from 400 acres of land and 75 loaves of bread a day, to distribute to his protégés. The Khedive, moreover, granted a hundred of the professors additional stipends ranging from 12 to 30 pounds a month, conferring on them also as gifts their purple-adorned robes of honor.²⁷

Many problems remained to be solved. In a delightful account of his childhood Taha Hussein (Ṭahā Ḥusayn) says that there were three shaykhs in his village. One of them owned a donkey transport business, a second was illiterate, while the third did not really understand the Qur'ān when he read it to the peasants.²⁸ If the village shaykhs were so ignorant, it is easy to imagine how backward the peasant children must have been.

A book written in 1904²⁹ gives a striking but perhaps somewhat exaggerated description of the conditions existing at that time. A poor boy often came from his village to al-Azhar, only to find that there was no proper provision to care for him. He lived inside the mosque, a victim of poverty, vermin and undernourishment. As his teachers did not supervise his studies, he was apt to join a class circle which was too advanced for him, in order to be with the older boys of his village. When he could not understand what was being taught and realized how lax the discipline was, he was tempted to neglect his studies and to become intellectually lazy. Because he did not read the newspapers or make friends in the city, he knew very little about Cairo and the outside world. "Pitiable is this student, who is ignorant of what is in front of him and behind him, to his right and left, above him and below."

In speaking about the mosque the author of this book remarked, "I do not suppose that there is anywhere in the world an upset condition which is as confused as the present organization of the much honored Azhar." Then he went on to explain that the scholars were clever but lacking in spirituality. Only a minority of them were interested in learning about new things and caring for the moral life of the people. The others were content to imitate the mediaeval writers, to be intellectually stagnant and neglectful of social needs. A student was obliged to spend twelve years to become eligible for examination, whereas

27. Arminjon, pp. 75, 79; Wāfi, pp. 80-82; 'Uyūn, p. 133.

28. Husayn (*Ayyām*) pp. 66-73.

29. *Āl-'Ilm wa'l-'Ulamā'* by Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī al-Zawāhīrī, who became the Rector in 1929. The quotations are from Ṣawāhīrī (Muḥammad), pp. 75 and 70.

with better pedagogy and discipline he should have been able to accomplish the same amount of progress in eight years. Although there were more than seven thousand young pupils and older students, only a few of them passed the examinations in any one year. Most of them left the institution to earn a living, though others remained at al-Azhar until death.

Even if this description is prejudiced, it makes it possible to understand how in 1895 the Syrian students could start a disgraceful fight and a few years later the boys could be so rude to a group of visitors that Lord Cromer prevented foreigners from going to the mosque during the following season. It also explains why there came to exist a tug of war between the conservatives, who opposed all changes in the curriculum and methods of study, and the progressive scholars desiring to introduce the modern sciences, foreign languages and an improved type of pedagogy.

When Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī was the Rector from 1899 to 1902, he thwarted progress to such an extent that the teachers, students, editors and leading citizens formed groups in opposition to him. This induced the Khedive to dismiss al-Bishrī, appointing 'Alī al-Biblāwī in his place. But unfortunately the Khedive interfered so much that this new Rector resigned, while Muḥammad 'Abduh withdrew from the Administrative Council. The next Rector was a conservative named 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shirbīnī, who told the newspaper reporters that the reformers were turning al-Azhar into a "school of philosophy and literature, opposing religion and putting out its light in this land and other Muslim countries."³⁰ After a year his reactionary influence came to an end, when Shaykh Ḥassūnah al-Nawāwī became the Rector for a second time. During his period of service there was enacted the law of March 5, 1908.

This law provided that in addition to the Administrative Council there should be a Supreme Council, called *al-Majlis al-A'lā*, to take charge of the budget and other important administrative matters in the affiliated schools, as well as in al-Azhar itself. The members were the Rector, the Grand Muftī, who was a Ḥanafī, the leading shaykhs of the Shāfi'ī and Mālikī codes of jurisprudence, the chief of the Khedive's Arabic office and the Director General of Awqāf.

The law of 1908 divided the studies into three groups: the

30. Sa'idī, p. 70.

religious sciences, the Arabic language courses and mathematics. At the same time the classes were graded as elementary, secondary or higher. It was, moreover, determined that the following officers should be appointed by government action: the Rector, his deputy or *wakīl*, the shaykhs of the four codes of jurisprudence and their deputies, as well as the members of the Supreme Council.

Once more there was friction, largely owing to the interference of the Khedive. Shaykh Ḥassūnah al-Nawāwī resigned to be followed by the conservative Salīm al-Bishrī, who became the Rector for a second time and, by means of the law of February 20, 1909, suspended the measures adopted during the previous year. A few months later the progressives gained the upper hand. By the law of October 15, 1909 the program of 1908 was re-established and during the following year an influential commission was formed to present a "Projet de Réforme" to the Council of Ministers, while the law of September 27, 1910, paved the way for a progressive new program.

This new program was contained in the law of May 13, 1911, which was signed by the Khedive, 'Abbās Ḥilmī II, and the President of the Council of Ministers, Muḥammad Sa'īd. In the first place, there were a number of clauses dealing with administration. It was reaffirmed that al-Azhar was the superior institution, to which the schools at Ṭanṭā, al-Dissūq, Damietta and Alexandria, as well as new ones which might be formed, were subject. Although the School for Judges, known as *Madrasat al-Qaḍā' al-Shar'ī*, was to maintain its organization of 1907, it was also to become part of the administrative system of al-Azhar. The Rector, or *Shaykh al-Azhar*, was to be in charge of all of these institutions.

Each code of jurisprudence at al-Azhar and each one of the schools affiliated with al-Azhar was to have a shaykh in charge, as well as a supervisor for each department of study. The Supreme Council was reorganized with the following members: the Rector, chairman; the Ḥanafī shaykh, vice-chairman; the shaykhs presiding over the other three codes of jurisprudence, the Director General of Awqāf and three other members to be appointed by the Council of Ministers. The Administrative Council was also reorganized and detailed rules were given for the formation of a secretariat at al-Azhar, councils for the affiliated schools and proper procedures for appointments.

There were also clauses in the law about the academic work. The curriculum was based upon four years of study in each of the

three grades: elementary, secondary and higher. The courses³¹ were designated in the following way:

1. *Elementary*—intoning the Qur'ān, commentary, tradition, theology, jurisprudence, religious ethics, biography of the Prophet, two kinds of grammar, composition, calligraphy, dictation and reading, arithmetic, geometry, designing, history, geography, natural history, physiology and hygiene. These subjects were spread over four years, most of them being taught in a simple way for young boys to understand.

2. *Secondary*—theology, religious ethics, legal studies and the philosophy of legislation, notary procedure, commentary, tradition, two kinds of grammar, etymology, reading, three kinds of rhetoric, composition, logic, the art of discussion, history, arithmetic, geometry, algebra, cosmography, calculation of religious seasons, physiology, hygiene and natural history.

3. *Higher studies*

(a) *Religious*—theology, the law, the philosophy of legislation, jurisprudence, commentary, tradition with its technical terms, legal procedures and contracts.

(b) *Linguistic*—two kinds of rhetoric, prosody, rhyme and Arabic literature.

(c) *Rational*—logic, judicial and administrative organization, *al-awqāf*, the allotment courts and pedagogy, both theoretical and practical.

The law of 1911 changed the times for holidays to a summer vacation during July and August, a second vacation beginning three weeks before Ramaḍān and ending ten days after the fast, and an additional ten days of holiday for the Feast of the Sacrifice, or *ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā*.

It was further determined that, in order to be eligible to enter the elementary school course, a boy must be ten years old, able to read and write, as well as to memorize half of the Qur'ān and to present certificates of good health and conduct. It was stipulated, moreover, that a holder of the primary certificate could continue with his secondary school studies, or teach young children. A student who obtained the secondary certificate was eligible to enter the higher studies, or else to teach calligraphy and dictation, to serve as a mosque leader or preacher, or as the

31. For the Arabic names of these studies, see the description of the curriculum in Appendix VI. The student was expected to choose courses to fit him for the career which he desired to undertake.

notary of a marriage bureau.³² The higher diploma gave a man the right to become a professor or to fill some judicial post.

Teachers and students were forbidden to take part in political agitation and no professor was allowed to work outside of al-Azhar without permission. Teachers and students were penalized if they were absent too often. The measures for students were private and public reprimands, suspension, warnings, stopping of the bread ration, expulsion, changing of schedule, barring from examinations or refusal of admission to a course. A teacher could be demoted or might have his salary reduced; in fact he might even be tried by the Supreme Council.

One of the most interesting sections of the law of 1911 described the institution of the Corps of the Great Scholars, often referred to as the Council of the 'Ulamā' and called in Arabic *Hay'at Kibār al-'Ulamā'*. It was established by assigning chairs to thirty of the leading shaykhs. Eleven of these thirty professors belonged to the Ḥanafī code of jurisprudence, nine to the Shāfi'ī, nine to the Mālīkī, and one to the Ḥanbalī.³³ Eight shaykhs taught jurisprudence,³⁴ three taught linguistic studies and at least two devoted themselves to each of the following subjects: commentary, tradition, theology, logic, history and the biography of the Prophet. New appointments were made by the government, based upon the nominations of the Rector and a majority of the 'ulamā'. A professor was eligible for nomination only if he was at least forty-five years old, had taught for ten years, written a book, won a prize and established a reputation for piety. Once he was appointed he received twenty pounds a month and was entitled to wear a robe of the first grade. He was expected to give three lectures a week on some basic subject and perhaps extra courses of a supplementary nature.

Various miscellaneous regulations were included in this law of 1911, the most interesting of them being the appointing of a committee to study the question of textbooks. Five hundred pounds were also appropriated, so that prizes could be offered to stimulate authors to write texts for the principal courses of the curriculum. At the same time it was stated that a textbook could not be used unless it was approved by the Supreme Council and the old rules for the use of glosses and notes were reaffirmed.

A law passed in 1916 determined that when a question con-

32. Notary: *al-ma'dhūn*.

33. The names of the original professors are in *Projet de Réforme*, pp. 59, 60.

34. Three were Ḥanafī, two Shāfi'ī, two Mālīkī and one Ḥanbalī.

nected with one of the affiliated schools was to be discussed in a meeting of the Supreme Council, the Rector should invite the principal of that school to attend the meeting. Provision was also made whereby, in case of absence from a meeting, the shaykh of one of the codes of jurisprudence could be represented by his deputy.

These laws did a great deal to reform and strengthen al-Azhar, but it will be noticed that the important members of the Corps of Great Scholars devoted themselves almost entirely to the religious, linguistic and legal subjects of the curriculum rather than to the more secular courses which were introduced about this time.

The old building, moreover, though spacious and beautiful, was very little changed from what it had been in mediaeval times. The principal addition was the *Riwāq al-'Abbāsī* in the south-west corner of the mosque enclosure.

Before the First World War al-Azhar was still a mosque-college, so that when it was urged that the name should be changed from the *Mosque of al-Azhar* to the *University of al-Azhar*, the government authorities refused to approve the idea.³⁵

On the other hand, al-Azhar had become so truly the leading educational center of Egypt, that three Christian boys seeking higher education pretended to be Muslims and attended classes at the mosque. All went well until one day, when these students were sitting in the shade of a wall, a stone fell on them. They were so frightened that they jumped up, swearing with Christian oaths and making the sign of the cross. As this incident made it evident that they were Christians they withdrew from al-Azhar where, as a rule, only Muslims were permitted to attend classes.³⁶

Although Muḥammad 'Abduh did not live long enough to found a national university, the project was encouraged by a number of other leaders. After preliminary discussions a meeting was held at the *Dīwān al-Awqāf*, with the result that during December, 1908, there was established the Egyptian University, now known as *Jāmi'at al-Qāhirah*.³⁷ In 1925 this institution was adopted by the government, so that it developed rapidly as a

35. The mosque is *al-Jāmi' al-Azhar* and the university, *Jāmi'at al-Azhar*. See Gairdner, p. 259.

36. Information given by a relative of one of the boys.

37. The name was changed first to University of Fu'ād al-Awwal and later to University of Cairo. The campus in Giza was occupied 1929-1930.

great national university, modern and secular. Thus al-Azhar ceased to be the unique center of higher learning in Egypt.

The *Projet de Réforme* gives an account of what al-Azhar was like a few years before the First World War.³⁸ In 1910 there were 8,248 students of all ages who had been at al-Azhar during the previous year and 1,589 new ones, making a total of 9,837. The curriculum included four years each of elementary, secondary and higher study. There were 177 classes, involving 3,781 hours of teaching time every week. In order to conduct these classes, it was necessary to employ 316 faculty members, each of whom was expected to teach from ten to twelve-and-a-half hours a week. There were also a number of special teachers for subjects such as penmanship and arithmetic, in addition to a group of professors on the point of retiring.

The Rector received 720 pounds a year, in addition to supplies of soap, butter, sugar, honey, candles, coffee, firewood, wheat, beans and straw. The Deputy Rector received 600 pounds a year, the Chief Inspector 336, the Secretary of the Supreme Council 540, a senior shaykh 240, a less important teacher something between 72 and 192 pounds, depending upon his rank, and a clerk 300 pounds at most.

The budget for the year 1910 was 41,232 pounds and 378 milliemes, equal at that time to over \$200,000. It was met by the income from endowments, funds controlled by the Khedive and appropriations from the Ministry of Finance.

This description makes it clear that, although al-Azhar had developed to a great extent since the time of Muḥammad 'Alī, many reforms were still needed in order to turn the old institution into a university adapted to the needs of modern times.

War and Revolution

During the First World War nationalism became an important factor in Egyptian life. This was partly due to dissatisfaction with the British, who established a protectorate over Egypt and inevitably were more concerned with winning the war than they were with improving the conditions of the peasants. It was also due to the influence of patriotic leaders, the most important one being Sa'd Zaghlūl, a product of al-Azhar. Accordingly, after the Armistice had been signed, Zaghlūl and a group of patriots formed the Wafd Party, which aimed to obtain

38. *Projet de Réforme*, pp. 107-109, 115; for the budget, pp. 62, 63, 67.

independence for Egypt. When some of the leaders of the movement were exiled in Malta, the students of al-Azhar and the School of Law in Cairo started street demonstrations, which soon developed into widespread rebellion.

The type of anarchy which developed is illustrated by an incident which took place when the people were leaving al-Azhar after the Friday prayer service. A lorry passed by filled with British soldiers. When the people saw it they rushed into the street, shouting and firing off guns. The soldiers then fired back, killing thirteen Egyptians and wounding thirty. During this period of excitement the troops used severe methods. One student of al-Azhar, for instance, was beaten with ten lashes and put in prison for three months.³⁹

The Arabic histories speak proudly of the zeal shown by teachers and students of al-Azhar during the revolution. Every evening thousands of people came to the mosque, where shaykhs and students incited them with inflammatory speeches. When the British authorities asked the Rector to lock the doors of the building, he refused to do so, saying that it must be kept open for public worship. On the other hand, the British stopped the political gatherings and classes were suspended, the students being too excited for study.⁴⁰

Not only Muslims but Christians as well took part in the revolution. One day a Coptic priest boldly walked into al-Azhar and started to harangue the students. When he said that the "British have red cheeks because they suck the blood of the Egyptians" and made similar remarks, the students lifted him on their shoulders and invited him to preach from their pulpit.⁴¹

The revolution came to an end when Lord Allenby became the High Commissioner and the exiles were allowed to leave Malta. It was about this same time that a law was passed, making it necessary for a boy to memorize the entire Qur'ān rather than only half of it, in order to enter the elementary school classes of al-Azhar.⁴²

Political conditions remained disturbed until 1922, when Egypt became a monarchy and independent, although an imposed treaty provided for British military privileges, rights for the minorities and a joint control over the Sūdān.

39. Chirol, pp. 177, 180.

40. 'Inān (1958) p. 236; Rāfi'ī (*Thawrah*) pp. 150-152, 191.

41. Story related by friends of the priest.

42. The law of 1921.

Between the Two Wars

The first king of the new monarchy was Fu'ād I, during whose reign al-Azhar was the victim of a three cornered struggle between the Palace, the British authorities and the nationalist leaders. Because the King treated al-Azhar in a generous way, he gained the support of the shaykhs. This aroused the jealousy of Zaghālūl, who tried to obtain the support of the 'ulamā' by placing the mosque under his own control. He started to transfer the endowments of al-Azhar to the government, making the institution dependent upon appropriations of the Ministries of Finance and al-Awqāf. This transfer of funds was finally completed in 1952, so that al-Azhar has become a state supported rather than a privately endowed institution. In the meantime a number of new laws were passed, affecting the fortunes of al-Azhar.

The law of August 26, 1923 provided for postgraduate work in the traditional fields of study. After gaining his higher diploma a student was eligible for specialization courses in one of the following departments: commentary, law and jurisprudence, tradition, theology, grammar and Islamic history, including religious ethics and preaching. If he was successful, the student received a diploma for specialization called *shahādat al-takhaṣṣuṣ*. This same law changed the School for Judges⁴³ from an autonomous institution into an integral part of al-Azhar, its program of studies being devoted to legal matters, both theoretical and practical.

Another law passed on March 4, 1925 gave the Ministry of Education supervision over this newly acquired department of al-Azhar. At the same time the normal college known as *Dār al-'Ulūm* was made dependent on al-Azhar,⁴⁴ but also subject to supervision by the ministry. Its special task was to teach Arabic studies in a progressive and thorough way. It was further stipulated that mathematics, history, geography, hygiene and the natural sciences were to be properly taught in the elementary and secondary school classes, many new textbooks being adopted for the elementary work.

Because the Rector, Muḥammad al-Jīzāwī, was conservative and the political conditions in the country were upset, the reforms of 1925 were annulled two years after they had been passed. Then, owing to the struggle between the cabinet and the palace,

43. *Madrasat al-Qadā' al-Shar'i*.

44. This arrangement was not permanent.

the law of May 31, 1927, decreed that the King's authority over al-Azhar in connection with finances and appointments should be exercised jointly with the Prime Minister. This action was modified in 1930, but again enforced in 1935.

During the First World War, Cairo was the principal center of the British military operations in the Middle East. The presence of great armed forces inevitably brought a flood of modernism into Egypt and the other Arab lands. After the war motor cars, the cinema and increased opportunities for foreign travel contributed to the development of a social and intellectual renaissance.

In spite of the European influences, however, conditions at al-Azhar changed very slowly. Most of the students still wore old-fashioned robes, with white bands around their caps in the form of turbans. In 1921 a visitor wrote that "A section of the sanctuary is entirely filled with lockers and chests with keys, where the day students lock up their books and notebooks."⁴⁵

About the same time another observer said that "In the great courtyard the students lie about on mats, some sleeping, some eating, some reciting aloud from their textbooks in a rhythmical sort of chant to which their swaying bodies keep time. Water carriers and itinerant food sellers and hawkers of all kinds move freely amongst them, swelling the din of voices with their traditional street cries."⁴⁶

In addition to this lack of order there was also a mediaeval attitude of mind. In 1923, for instance, an item of 500 pounds for modernizing the textbooks was dropped from the budget, because during the course of a dozen years the appropriation had not been spent. During the same year one of the shaykhs⁴⁷ had his pay withdrawn for twenty-five days as a penalty for publishing a book which criticized some of the backward methods used in the schools affiliated with al-Azhar. Three other cases of discipline became famous, arousing a great deal of public emotion.

In 1925 Shaykh 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq wrote a book *Islām and the Fundamentals of Authority*, in which he advocated a separation of religion and government, with the termination of the Caliphate. A court composed of twenty-four leading shaykhs of al-Azhar, with the Rector presiding, unanimously declared Judge 'Abd al-Rāziq guilty of conduct "unbecoming the character of

45. Translated from *Monde Egyptien*, Tome II, No. 1, Dec. 1921, p. 15.

46. Quoted from Chirol, p. 234.

47. Shaykh 'Abd al-Muta'āl al-Ṣa'idī; see Ṣa'idī, pp. 90-99.

an 'ālim." He was therefore expelled from the 'ulamā' and *Sharī'ah* court system, his name being removed from the records of al-Azhar. During the following year Dr. Taha Hussein published his book on pre-Islamic poetry,⁴⁸ in which he argued that the early poems were not really written before the time of Islām. He also used higher criticism to question whether Abraham and Ishmael actually founded the Ka'bah at Makkah and whether Abraham's religion really was Islām. The Rector of al-Azhar brought legal proceedings against Dr. Taha Hussein and although the court dismissed the case a great deal of bitterness was aroused.

A third event of a similar nature occurred in 1931, when Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt was dismissed because he advocated reform. One can realize how much conditions have changed, as Shaykh Shaltūt became the Rector in 1958.

In 1929 a law was passed to authorize the giving of scholarship payments in semiannual installments, to take the place of the dole of bread. Even at that time, however, the life of the students was still very simple. The married boys left their wives with their parents and like their fellow students had no social activities with girls of their own age. If people in the streets or coffee houses saw a student of al-Azhar, with his Oriental robes, taking a drink of liquor or talking to a prostitute, they shouted at him until he was overcome with shame.⁴⁹

On the other hand, the students were constantly aroused by political agitators. When Shaykh al-Jizāwī died the government leaders chose Shaykh Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī to take his place as the Rector. Many of the shaykhs opposed this appointment, as they did not know al-Marāghī and thought that his reform program was too radical. Political agitators took advantage of this situation, stirring up the students to such an extent that in 1929 al-Marāghī resigned. The King then appointed to serve as Rector, Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī al-Zawāhirī, who was able to accomplish much, because he was supported both by the King and the faculty. His success was also due to the fact that he limited his program to changing the textbooks, pedagogy and organization of al-Azhar, whereas al-Marāghī had sought in addition a liberal interpretation of religious thought.⁵⁰

Because of the prestige of the Rector and the cooperation

48. In Arabic: 'Abd-al-Rāziq, *al-Islām wa-Uṣūl al-Ḥukm* and Taha Ḥusayn, *al-Shi'r al-Jāhili*. See Adams, pp. 253-268.

49. Related by a graduate.

50. To open the door of *al-ijtihād* for learning and religion.

extended by government authorities, the law of November 15, 1930 was issued by King Fu'ād, changing the structure of al-Azhar so that it became organized as a true university. As this law and the one passed in 1933 to supplement it were both incorporated into the law of 1936, they will be dealt with at this point in only a general way.

The elementary and secondary school classes were taken away from the mosque and assigned to the institutions attached to al-Azhar. These preparatory schools were called Religious Institutes or *al-Ma'āhid al-Dīniyah*⁵¹ and in 1930 they existed at Cairo, Alexandria, Ṭanṭā, Zaḳāzīq, Asyūt, Dissūq and Damietta. Extension courses were also established in Cairo, Ṭanṭā, Minyah, Sūhāj and Qīnā, to teach religion and the Arabic language to persons unable to attend school in a regular way.

The higher studies were divided among three university colleges, which were inaugurated by King Fu'ād in 1932.⁵²

The College of Theology, *Kulliyat Uṣūl al-Dīn*, was placed in a beautiful building⁵³ on the north side of the city where it is still located. The course in Preaching and Guidance,⁵⁴ established in 1912, became a part of this college.

The College of Law, *Kulliyat al-Sharī'ah al-Islamīyah*, was temporarily placed in a building situated near the southeast corner of the 'Ābdīn Palace, originally used for the School of Judges,⁵⁵ which at this time became entirely absorbed by the new law college.

The College of the Arabic Language, *Kulliyat al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah*, offering a liberal arts course, was also installed in this old building.

The law of 1930 included in the curriculum the following subjects, which were later omitted: in the elementary school course, religious ethics; in the secondary program, arithmetic, ethics and civics; in the College of the Arabic Language, Pre-Islamic and Islamic history; in the College of Law, Arabic literature and rhetoric and in the College of Theology, rhetoric and literature.

Previous to this time, the shaykhs in charge of the four codes of jurisprudence at al-Azhar had been responsible for directing

51. The singular is *al-ma'had al-dīnī*.

52. Different books give different dates, so that there may have been ceremonies in 1933 as well.

53. *Al-Madrasah al-Khāzindārah* on Shārī' Shubrā.

54. *Al-Wa'z wa'l-Irshād*.

55. *Madrasat al-Qaḍā' al-Shar'ī*.

much of the academic work, but after this reorganization the authorities at the head of the three colleges were responsible for the academic studies, as well as for general administration.

The law of 1930 was supplemented by another law promulgated by King Fu'ād on May 29, 1933, to establish the postgraduate work in a definite way. This specialization⁵⁶ was as follows:

Muslim Law, requiring three extra years of study.

Preaching and Guidance, also based on three extra years.

Pedagogy, representing two additional years of work, with courses in education and the liberal arts.

In order to be eligible to receive a certificate for this advanced work, a student was required to pass oral and written examinations, as well as to present a thesis.⁵⁷ In theory this specialization was like the French *licence*, giving a student the right to enter into certain forms of professional work.

A student who completed his undergraduate course⁵⁸ satisfactorily was also given a chance to enter upon a course of study, which lasted for at least six years, culminating in the title of "Professor,"⁵⁹ similar to the European doctorate. In order to be eligible to undertake this advanced work he was expected to have completed the courses prerequisite to his specialty, to have been approved by the Supreme Council and to have enrolled not more than four years after completing his undergraduate work. He was also expected to pass difficult examinations, as well as to write a thesis resembling a book.

At the same time that these reforms were being made, King Fu'ād provided funds to remove some old buildings next to al-Azhar and the Rector started several new projects linking al-Azhar with all parts of the world. One of his activities was the sending of missions to China, Japan, Ethiopia, South Africa and other lands, in order to provide accurate information about Islām. Another enterprise was the publication of a magazine and the establishment of a printing press. The publication was first issued in 1930 with the name *The Light of Islām*; some years later the name was changed to *Journal of al-Azhar*.⁶⁰

In spite of his many accomplishments Shaykh Muḥammad al-Zawāhiri met with growing opposition. On the one hand the

56. *Al-takḥassuṣ*, see law of 1923.

57. *Al-risālah*.

58. The course leading to *al-shahādah al-'ālimīyah*.

59. *Ustādh*.

60. *Nūr al-Islām* changed to *Majallat al-Azhar*.

progressives felt that he had compromised too much with the conservatives, while on the other hand seventy old teachers were angry because they were dropped from the faculty. As, moreover, the King favored al-Zawāhirī, the Wafd politicians incited the students to demonstrate against him, while the British wished to bring back al-Marāghī, who had won their confidence while he was serving as a judge in the Sūdān. In 1935 the opposition became so strong that al-Zawāhirī resigned, so that Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī could once more become the Rector.⁶¹

The new Rector persuaded the King to issue the law of March 26, 1936, which arranged the material contained in the laws of 1930 and 1933 as a comprehensive statement. This very important document began by declaring that "al-Jāmi' al-Azhar is the greatest Muslim religious and scientific institute." Its purpose is to uphold and propagate the (*Sharī'ah*) law and the Arabic language, as well as to train scholars to teach these subjects and to administer the law.

The Rector, who is appointed by the King from the Corps of Great Scholars, is the "greatest chief of all of the men of religion and the highest supervisor of the personal conduct of the 'ulamā' and legal authorities, whether or not they belong to al-Azhar."

The old regulations for the Supreme Council and the Corps of Great Scholars were not changed in any important way. There were, however, a few changes of an academic nature deserving mention.

It was stipulated that the Supreme Council should determine the number of pupils to be admitted to the first grade in the elementary schools attached to al-Azhar. In order to be eligible to enter this grade, the pupil must be between the ages of twelve and sixteen, in good health, able to recite the entire Qur'ān and successful in passing tests in reading, dictation, penmanship and arithmetic.

The diploma granted at the end of four years of undergraduate study was called *shahādat al-dirāsah al-'āliyah* and the certificate for specialization *al-shahādah al-'ālimīyah ma' al-ijāzah*. The higher diploma, similar to that of a doctorate, was designated as *al-shahādah al-'ālimīyah ma' darajat ustādh*.

Philosophy was added to the studies of the College of Law,

61. Zawāhirī (Fakhr-al-Dīn) pp. 330-336; (Muḥammad) Intr. pp. 40-42; Ṣa'īdi, pp. 128-131; Marlowe, pp. 293, 294.

while a foreign language and the sources of jurisprudence were introduced to the curriculum of the College of Theology. The specialization courses in Law and Teaching and Guidance were reduced from three to two years, the latter being simplified by dropping some work in hygiene, theology and ethics.

This law of 1936 still serves both as a constitution and a program of studies for al-Azhar. Accordingly, the material which it contains about the colleges and religious institutes, the administrative officers and curriculum, will be dealt with in the next chapter and Appendix VI, which describe al-Azhar as it exists at the present time.⁶²

The law ends with general regulations, largely devoted to the certificates and diplomas. The government confirms the granting of diplomas with the title of professor, whereas the others are issued by the Rector. The practical value of the academic awards is described in the following way: The holder of a secondary certificate is eligible to teach in a *maktab*, or elementary school independent of government control. The holder of the undergraduate diploma is entitled to enter a clerical position at al-Azhar or in the courts, inheritance boards and Ministry of Awqāf. He is also eligible to teach in extension courses and mosque classes, or to serve as a preacher, prayer leader, or as notary in a marriage bureau.

Specialization in law authorizes work in a (*sharī'ah*) law court or *fatwā* office, or as a lawyer in a court or inheritance board. Specialization in Preaching and Guidance makes a man eligible for evangelism and spiritual revival, while the professional course in pedagogy prepares a student to teach in one of the religious institutes attached to al-Azhar, or in a government school.

The holder of a diploma with the title of "professor" is eligible to teach in one of the three colleges of al-Azhar, or in an Egyptian university conducted by the government.

Although numerous new laws have been passed during the period between 1936 and 1959, the changes which have been made are of minor importance. The principal modifications can be summed up as follows:

In 1945 a section of the College of the Arabic Language was established to teach intoning and reading the Qur'an. Many new

62. The law of 1936 gave al-Azhar the form of a true university, so that at the Harvard Tricentennial of 1936 the representative of al-Azhar was asked to lead the procession, his institution being given recognition as the oldest university existing at that time.

affiliated schools have been founded in different parts of Egypt. These religious institutes are listed in Appendix V. The Corps of Great Scholars was reorganized, so as to form the "Assembly of Great Scholars," *Jamā'at Kibār al-'Ulamā'*. This Assembly was represented by three of its members on the Supreme Council, one member from each of the three colleges, the term of service being three years. These representatives must be nominated by their colleagues from among the three senior professors of each college and then appointed by the Council of Ministers. This system makes the Supreme Council democratic and gives the members of the faculty a share in the administration.

The following changes in curriculum have also been enforced by the laws passed since 1936. Civics, the English language and military training have been added to the secondary school course. Grammar, rhetoric, Arabic literature and the English language have been included in the undergraduate course in theology. In the College of the Arabic Language the formation of words, *al-waḍ'*, prosody and rhyme have been dropped, but there have been added comparative literature, called *al-adab al-muqāran*, jurisprudence, sociology, Islamic history, modern logic and philosophy, geography, penmanship, an Oriental language, psychology, the history of Islamic countries, the history of the Arabic and Islamic sciences and the cultures of peoples.

A law of 1955 changed the length of the specialization course in pedagogy from two years to one. At the same time the course leading to the diploma with the title of "professor" was reduced from six years to a minimum of three and a maximum of five. The academic year was also divided into two semesters, with necessary adjustments for registration, examinations and preparation of the theses.⁶³

During the same year that the law of 1936 was passed, the new administration building was erected across the square from the main gateway of al-Azhar. Two large stone buildings were also constructed on a low hill to the east of the mosque. Although they were originally intended as residential buildings for the older students, they have temporarily been employed to accommodate the hospital, clinic and large religious institute of Cairo.

During these years when a long series of reform laws resulted in the reorganization of al-Azhar, education in Egypt as a whole became far more progressive than it had been in past years. The

63. Appendix VI gives the curriculum for the academic year 1958-1959.

following figures for the enrollment of students in government school and universities throw light on what the Egyptians have been doing to develop their educational system.⁶⁴

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
1913-1914.....	248,572	29,276	277,848
1944-1945.....	603,474	443,008	1,046,482
1954-1955.....	1,485,342	700,083	2,185,425

The government institutions to a great extent used modern methods and taught the same subjects which were taught in Europe and America, so that they formed a contrast to al-Azhar and its affiliated schools. In addition to the government program of education, many foreign institutions were founded in Egypt, filling the country with progressive theories of pedagogy. As Cairo University became a large modern institution at Giza, or *al-Jizah*, on the west side of the Nile, al-Azhar was destined to compete with a great secular university.

During the reign of Muḥammad 'Alī, al-Azhar influenced his new secular schools, because so many students were recruited from al-Azhar for his new government institutions. The books written by professors of al-Azhar were another source of influence, as they were used in many of the schools. During the years that followed, al-Azhar helped to retain the old system of learning texts and notes by heart, depending upon tradition and imitating the ancient authorities at the expense of research, thus hampering modern ideas and encouraging reliance on memory in the place of original thought. At the same time, however, al-Azhar exerted a good influence on the secular schools, especially in connection with the Arabic language and the spiritual teachings of the Qur'ān.

As al-Azhar influenced the new secular schools, they in turn influenced the old mosque, giving it the organization and many of the studies of a modern university. Thus even before the Second World War began, al-Azhar became better adapted than it had been to the changing conditions of the twentieth century.

The Second World War

As Cairo became the general headquarters of the Allied Army of the Middle East, it was a strategic point of great importance

64. Statistics supplied by the Ministry of Education.

during the war with Hitler. Because of huge army expenditures and a rapid growth of industry, with many new factories supported by war time prices, the country became more progressive and prosperous than it had been before.

In spite of the war, plans were made to celebrate the millennium of al-Azhar. As the mosque was built during the Muslim year 361, the festivities were due to take place in the lunar year 1361, or the solar year 1942.⁶⁵ It was arranged for the King to provide an evening meal for the teachers and graduates at the palace, as well as a supper for the students at al-Azhar. The celebration, however, was indefinitely postponed, probably because the leaders of the Wafd feared that it might turn into a demonstration against their political party. At the same time stamps worth ten, fifteen and twenty *mills* were printed with a picture of al-Azhar and the date of the millennium. They were not placed on sale, however, until 1957. Three years later a sixty *mills* air post stamp was also printed picturing the domes and minarets of al-Azhar.

In 1943 the students demonstrated against establishing diplomatic relations between Egypt and the U.S.S.R., because they felt that the Russians were treating their Muslim subjects unfairly. The following year the students were again stirred up, but this time against their Rector, because he served the King, rather than the political leaders. The situation became so strained that classes were suspended and the Rector lived in retirement at Halwān, until the fall of the Naḥḥās cabinet and the defeat of the Wafd Party.

When al-Marāghī died in 1945, Shaykh Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Rāziq took his place as Rector. He was a disciple of Muḥammad ‘Abduh, who had served as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cairo and Minister of Awqāf. During his two years as Rector he encouraged the teaching of foreign languages and the sending of graduates to Europe for study.

The years following the Second World War were unhappy ones for Egypt. King Fārūq proved to be a disappointment; there was constant friction between the King, the political leaders and the British; inflation became a serious problem and fighting in Palestine revealed the corruption of the army. There was so little stability that there was a rapid sequence of cabinet changes, while six Rectors in quick succession followed Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rāziq.

65. Kirk (*The War*) p. 228; Inān (1958) p. 5.

During this period the Muslim Brothers⁶⁶ began to exert a political influence. The founder was at first so sincerely interested in purifying and vitalizing Islām, that he gained a large following, enlisting many of the teachers and students of al-Azhar to become members of his movement. It was not long, however, before this reform was corrupted by politics. On December 12, 1947, for instance, leaders of the movement organized a demonstration at al-Azhar, haranguing the students with a loud-speaker installed in a motor car, and leading the procession through the streets of the city.

In the midst of these uncertainties there occurred one of the most important events in the history of al-Azhar. The government provided funds for the building of a new university quadrangle to the east of the old mosque. During the years 1950 and 1951 the spacious assembly hall and the two large buildings used by the Colleges of Law and the Arabic Language were erected. Although the College of Theology remained in its old building on the north side of the city, the new quadrangle influenced a majority of the teachers and students in a very definite way. It changed the atmosphere of the institution from that of a mosque-college to the much freer spirit of a modern university. It also turned a nostalgia for the past into dreams of the future.

On January 26, 1952 there occurred a serious crisis in Cairo. The mobs burned Shephard's Hotel, the Turf Club and a department store, as well as cinemas, restaurants and night clubs. At least a dozen Englishmen were murdered and there was wholesale looting. When the King dismissed Naḥḥās Pasha, it proved to be impossible for any other Prime Minister to form a stable government. Finally, on July 23, 1952, a group of army officers conducted a bloodless revolution, ushering in a new period in the history both of Egypt and of al-Azhar.

66. Shaykh Ḥasan al-Bannā founded *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* in 1928. He was killed in 1949 and Ismā'il al-Hudaybī became the Director General. See Ḥusaynī, pp. 9-130.

CHAPTER VII

Al-Azhar After A Thousand Years

The Revolution

ON JULY 26, 1952, King Fārūq abdicated and, although his infant son was named as his successor, on June 18, 1953 the officers of the Revolution terminated the monarchy, turning Egypt into a republic.

With the establishing of a centralized government under the leadership of Colonel Jamāl 'Abd al-Nāṣir, al-Azhar is no longer the victim of a tug of war between the King, the British and the Wafd. Student life in Cairo has been placed under such strict control that the old atmosphere of political agitation has given way to academic calm. The shaykhs are being encouraged to adopt progressive measures, so as to do their share in developing the internal affairs of the new Republic. At the same time there is an increased effort to bring students to al-Azhar from Asia and Africa, in order that they may gain a thorough knowledge of Islām and its problems in the modern world.

The shaykhs have given their support to the Republic in a loyal way. In 1956, when the Canal Zone was attacked, they organized classes for military training. Two years later, when the Rector asked the people to observe the Fast of Ramaḍān, he also appealed to them to support the United Arab Republic. Then in March 1959, when Communist agitation in 'Irāq menaced Egyptian plans for Arab unity, the newly appointed Rector¹ declared a holy war against the Communists, appealing to Believers to guard against a danger which was threatening to undermine Islām and to turn Muslims back to days of unbelief.

After ten centuries of changing fortunes, the old mosque is just as important as it was when it was first built. In 1958, for instance, President 'Abd al-Nāṣir attended a Ramaḍān service somewhat as the Fāṭimids did. At the end of January 1958, when plans were being made to form the United Arab Republic, the Presidents of Syria and Egypt worshipped together

1. Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt.

at the mosque. On October 24, 1958, the Minister of Awqāf preached at al-Azhar in honor of United Nations Day, and during March 1959, the Amīr Muḥammad al-Badr, Crown Prince of al-Yaman, attended both the Friday prayers and a service of sympathy for the victims of Communist strife in 'Irāq.

Although al-Azhar was built during the lunar year 361, the educational work was not organized in a formal way until the year 378 of the Muslim calendar. As the Muslim year 1378 coincided with the academic year 1958-1959, the mosque had been a center of higher learning during a millennium. It is, therefore, interesting to picture what al-Azhar is like as it carries on its work in the adventurous setting of the United Arab Republic, a thousand lunar years after the Caliph al-'Azīz provided for thirty-five students to live and study at the mosque.

The educational work forms a program of religious instruction, which is complementary to the secular system of the Ministry of Education and includes the following units:

The University

The University (*al-Jāmi'ah al-Azhariyah*) is composed of three colleges, which offer undergraduate, professional and postgraduate courses.

1. College of the Arabic Language (*Kulliyat al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah*), similar to a college of liberal arts.
2. College of Islamic Law (*Kulliyat al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmīyah*), providing a thorough training in Muslim law.
3. College of the Fundamentals of Religion (*Kulliyat Uṣūl al-Dīn*), a school of theology.

Supplementary Courses

Institute of Islamic Missions (*Ma'had al-Bu'ūth al-Islāmīyah*), a program of study for foreign students unprepared to follow the official curriculum. It consists of three courses, elementary, secondary and higher, each four years in length.

Institute of Orientation (*Ma'had al-Tawjīyih*), a new department established during the second semester of 1958-1959. It fits men for foreign service and also helps foreign students to become eligible to enter the regular courses of al-Azhar.

Institute of Readings (*Ma'had al-Qirā'āt*), a four year course to teach boys how to read and intone the Qur'ān. As this unit

does not have a home of its own, the classes are held in the old mosque building.

Religious Institutes

These schools are divided between the two following groups:

1. *Al-Ma'āhid al-Niẓāmīyah*

There are twenty-two of these institutions, which are conducted as an integral part of the system of al-Azhar. Many of them have handsome buildings, with dormitories for boarding pupils, and all but four of them have secondary as well as elementary school classes. The school at Ṭanṭā² has over two thousand students, while the institutes at Cairo, al-Manṣūrah and al-Zaqāzīq each has an enrolment of over a thousand.

2. *Al-Ma'āhid al-Ḥurrah*

These "Free" institutes are affiliated with al-Azhar. There are seventeen of them in different parts of Egypt, all but four containing the complete elementary school program.

Administration and Faculty

The chief executive of al-Azhar is the Rector (*Shaykh al-Azhar*), who presides over the activities of the institution, also serving as the government advisor for Islamic affairs. During the year 1958 Shaykh Maḥmūd Shaltūt was appointed to fill this position.

For each of the three colleges there is a Dean (*al-'Amīd*), and for a dean as well as for the Rector, there is a deputy (*al-wakīl*). There are also officers to handle the Institutes, finances, the archives, registration, examinations, the library, foreign students, the journal and printing press, as well as other departments of work.

The principal administrative board is the Supreme Council (*Majlis al-Azhar al-A'lā*), which is responsible for the work as a whole. Each one of the colleges also has its own executive committee. During the year 1958 three new committees were appointed to take charge of the following branches of work:

1. Islamic Culture, which includes preaching and guidance, research, the foreign students and missions abroad, the

2. It is no longer attached to the Mosque of Aḥmad al-Badawī.

library, the journal and printing press and the Assembly Hall lectures.

2. The Islamic Institutes and charitable schools, fostered by al-Azhar to teach poor children how to memorize the Qur'ān.
3. Personnel problems and other questions connected with the colleges. This committee serves as an advisory board, being called the Council of the University of al-Azhar (*Majlis al-Jāmi'ah al-Azharīyah*). The chairman of each of these three committees is a member of the Supreme Council.

According to the Law of 1911 thirty leading professors were appointed to form the Corps of the Great Scholars (*Hay'at Kibār al-'Ulamā'*). When most of these professors had either died or come close to the age of retirement, the Law of 1954 changed the system, so that the faculty has become organized like that of a modern university, with three ranks of teachers:

1. Professor with a Chair (*al-Ustādh dhū-al-Kursī*)
2. Assistant Professor (*al-Ustādh al-Musā'id*)
3. Instructor (*al-Mudarris*)

Each one of the Religious Institutes has its own staff of teachers, only a few of whom have the highest rank, the others being trained for elementary and secondary school work rather than university study.

During the academic year 1958-1959 the number of professors, instructors and school teachers was as follows: 280 in the three Colleges of the University; 143 in the supplementary courses for foreign students and Quranic readings, and 1,377 in the Religious Institutes: a total of 1,800.³

These figures do not include physicians, accountants, secretaries, members of missions abroad and over 380 preachers, serving al-Azhar in the mosques and schools of Egypt.

Most of the teachers have been trained in the system conducted by al-Azhar. A number of the leading professors have received doctorates from the universities of England, France and Germany. It is the present policy to send men to Europe and America, with hopes that after obtaining advance degrees they will teach at al-Azhar. As many of the young teachers and some of the leading shaykhs wear modern clothing and speak foreign

3. Statistics from the Ministry of Education. The salaries are somewhat as follows: administrative officers, 120 Egyptian pounds a month; professors, 80 to 100; assistant professors, something less; instructors 25 to start with and increases.

languages, the faculty is very different from what it was during the nineteenth century.

The New Buildings

The original building has not been changed in any important way since the beginning of the twentieth century, but the marble pavement and handsome rugs presented by King Fārūq make the sanctuary more beautiful than it used to be.⁴ Although the only classes held there are for boys learning to read the Qur'ān, the old mosque still serves for university prayers and the students often spend their spare time in the courtyard.

Across the square from the main gateway there is the Administration building, erected in 1936, containing the executive offices of al-Azhar and its Institutes. It is a stone building with broad stairs and hallways, pleasant balconies and large windows. The modern offices are well furnished and supplied with telephones, typewriters and filing cabinets. Throughout the building there is an atmosphere of order and efficiency, a great contrast to the old-fashioned ways of former times.

On the east side of the mosque there is a large vacant lot, beyond which there is the new university quadrangle, with building sites surrounding an open court. As some old houses were removed in 1955, this enclosure is now extensive enough to accommodate all of the university classes.

To the right of the entrance to the new quadrangle there is the Assembly Hall (*Qā'at al-Muḥāḍarāt*), two stories high with a modern minaret at one corner. It was completed in 1950 and can accommodate four thousand students, the seating and ventilation being excellent.

Across the central courtyard and to the left there are two large stone buildings. One of them was erected in 1950 for the College of Islamic Law and the other a year later for the College of the Arabic Language. They contain offices for the deans, as well as classrooms furnished with modern desks and blackboards. In the rear of the quadrangle there are vacant spaces, where it is planned to build a new library and a hall for the College of Theology, which still occupies a site on the north side of the city.

Beyond this university quadrangle and on somewhat higher ground there are two other stone buildings which have already

4. During the spring of 1959 a new prayer niche was being made to the left of the central one.

been mentioned. Although they were intended to be used as residential halls for university students, they were temporarily assigned to the Cairo Institute, the hospital and clinic. Between these buildings and the street there is an open space used for sports and military training.

In the Muslim year 378 the Caliph al-'Azīz built living quarters for thirty-five students. In the lunar year 1378 President 'Abd al-Nāṣir provided the funds to accommodate 4,800 foreign students. This new residential center is known as the City of Islamic Missions.⁵ It is situated on high ground a mile and a half north of al-Azhar, where there are forty residential buildings, a hospital and twenty acres devoted to athletic purposes.

Student Enrollment

There are no accurate registration figures for the period previous to 1846. Even since that time the authorities do not always agree about the statistics, but the following records are fairly accurate:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>
1846-1847.....	7,403	1918-1919.....	15,826
1855-1856.....	5,940	1928-1929.....	11,157
1867-1868.....	4,712	1938-1939.....	13,163
1875-1876.....	10,780	1948-1949.....	18,582
1898-1899.....	8,246	1958-1959.....	39,016
1908-1909.....	9,001		

These statistics include the elementary and secondary school boys, as well as the older students. The great increase in recent years is due to the opening of many new religious institutes in different parts of Egypt.⁶

Before the reorganization of 1930 the students were classified according to the four codes of jurisprudence in the following way:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Ḥanafī</i>	<i>Shāfi'ī</i>	<i>Mālikī</i>	<i>Ḥanbalī</i>
1875.....	1,278	5,651	3,826	25
1892.....	1,774	3,941	2,508	36
1902.....	2,951	4,569	2,654	29

5. *Madīnat al-Bu'ūth al-Islāmīyah* or *al-Madīnah al-Sakanīyah li-Ṭalabat al-Bu'ūth al-Islāmīyah*.

6. 'Uyūn, p. 85. Zayyātī, pp. 204-208. 'Inān (1958) pp. 277-283. Rajab, p. 70. Gairdner, pp. 267-271. Arminjon, p. 51. Wāfī, pp. 66, 67. Mubārak, Part I, p. 88; Part IV, p. 14. Heyworth-Dunne, p. 405. Bayram, pp. 59-61. Khaffājī, Vol. II, p. 85.

After 1930 the enrollment figures were classified according to the academic units, rather than the codes of jurisprudence. The following table shows how many students there were at the end of a millennium of higher learning, the number of classes and teachers also being given.⁷

First Semester, 1958-1959

<i>Academic Unit</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Classes</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
<i>University</i>			
Undergraduates			
Law	1,117	22	104
Theology	949	18	57
Arabic Language	2,247	36	119
Graduates, all three			
Colleges	982	16	*
	5,295		280
<i>Supplementary</i>			
Foreign Students	1,321	42	99
Readings	645	28	44
	1,966		143
<i>Religious Institutes⁸</i>			
al-Ma'āhid al-Niẓāmīyah			
Secondary	12,181	262	
Primary	15,058	319	1,278
al-Ma'āhid al-Ḥurrah	4,516	116	99
	31,755		1,377
	39,016		1,800

*The same teachers have charge of graduates and undergraduates.

The following statistics show how many students graduate from the university courses every year.⁹

7. Statistics of the Ministry of Education for the beginning of the academic year. Thālithah, pp. 28, 29, does not separate graduate from undergraduate students and gives the totals for February, 1959, as follows: Law, 1398; Theology, 1140; Arabic Language, 3007; Foreign Student courses, 1326; Readings, 663.

8. For detailed figures see Appendix V.

9. Nashrah (1957) p. 95. Compare Matthews, p. 109; 'Uyūn, pp. 89-91; Rajab, p. 71.

A. Students completing the undergraduate course and receiving the diploma, <i>Shahādat al-Dirāsah al-‘Āliyah</i> .			
College of the Arabic Language	358		
College of Law	222		
College of Theology	102	682	
B. Students obtaining the licence diploma, <i>al-Ijāzah</i> .			
Pedagogy	323		
Sharī‘ah Law	29		
Preaching and Guidance	13	365	
C. Students completing the Foreign Students’ pro- gram so as to receive the diploma, <i>Shahādat al- Bu’ūth al-Islāmīyah</i>			
			335
Total			1,382

These figures do not include 48 boys who completed courses in Quranic readings and other subjects, which are not on a university level.

Foreign Students

When speaking about the men who were living at al-Azhar during the fifteenth century, the historian al-Maqrīzī mentioned that they were “Persians, Negroes, inhabitants of the Egyptian Rīf and North Africans.”¹⁰ We know that there were many foreign students at al-Azhar during the Ottoman period and nineteenth century, but accurate statistics are lacking. We do have, however, very reliable figures for the year 1902. In a report written for a conference at Hamburg, Muṣṭafā Bayram said that there were 645 foreign students belonging to the following groups: Turks, 104; Kurds, 9; Syrians including Lebanese and Palestinians, 264; ‘Irāqīs, 2; Hījāzīs from Arabia, 7; Indians, 3; Afghans, 5; Javanese, 7; Tunisians, 20; inhabitants of Tripoli in North Africa, 51; Algerians, 27; Moroccans, 22; Central Africans, 118; miscellaneous, 6. The Central Africans came as follows: from Ethiopia, 6; Dārfūr, 12; Sinnār, 28; Burnū and Dikārah, 27; Berbers, 45.¹¹

During the academic year 1945-1946 there were 814 foreign students and two years later there were 999. In writing about

10. Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ*) Part IV, p. 54, 55.

11. Bayram, p. 60.

them the former Secretary-General of al-Azhar said that students had come from Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, the Sūdān, Somaliland, Abyssinia, Burnū, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda, Syria, 'Irāq, Arabia including al-Yaman, Java, Ceylon, India, China, Japan, Russia, Caucasia, Asia Minor, Kurdistān, Afghanistan, Turkey, Albania, Yugoslavia, Poland and Bulgaria.¹²

At the end of the monarchy a foreign student could usually obtain the same grant as an Egyptian—three to five pounds a month as a substitute for the bread dole. Although in 1958 this aid was discontinued for Egyptian students above the elementary school grade, a new system was adopted, giving a foreigner nine pounds a month, if he was in the university, and eight pounds if he was enrolled in a Religious Institute. During the year 1959 the Supreme Council authorized the Rector, in case of special conditions, to grant even more to a foreign student, within a maximum of fifteen pounds a month.

Although the *riwāq* system is no longer organized as it used to be, each student from abroad is still assigned to a unit for administrative purposes. During the academic year 1958-1959 there were 2,708 foreign students divided among 20 units of the *riwāq* system.¹³

Blind Students

Al-Azhar has always encouraged blind students to undertake enough training to become self-supporting. Some of them enroll in the courses for Qur'ān recital, so that they can earn money by intoning passages at festivals and public meetings. Others study the more advanced subjects, preparing themselves to be teachers and preachers. This service being rendered to the blind is an important one, as during one year, for instance, there were 571 blind boys in the Religious Institutes, 112 in the undergraduate courses of the Colleges, and 52 in professional and postgraduate classes.¹⁴

The Budget

The following figures show how the budget of al-Azhar has expanded since the time when accurate statistics were first recorded. Increasingly large amounts have been required to meet

12. 'Uyūn, pp. 83, 84.

13. For detailed statistics see Appendix V.

14. 'Uyūn, p. 104-111.

the cost of higher salaries, the founding of many new religious institutes, wartime inflation and greater efficiency. The figures represent the income stated in pounds.¹⁵

<i>Year</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Income</i>
1892-1893.....	4,378	1930-1931.....	335,964
1901-1902.....	14,001	1940-1941.....	342,600
1910-1911.....	49,720	1950-1951.....	1,230,390
1920-1921.....	206,881	1958-1959.....	2,125,100

The budget for the academic year 1958-1959 was as follows:

<i>Income</i>	
Endowments	59,700
Government ministries	1,774,475
Special charity funds	5,125
Government payments to meet inflation	260,000
Supplements from Awqāf	25,800
Total	2,125,100

<i>Expenditure</i>	
Salaries, allowances	1,009,000
General expenses	498,300
New improvements	13,500
Foreign students and Missions Abroad	344,300
Compensation for inflation	260,000
Total	2,125,100

As al-Azhar has become a state supported institution, even the income from endowments is controlled by the Ministry of Awqāf.

Academic Work

Before being permitted to enter the elementary school course of a religious institute attached to al-Azhar, a boy must attend a neighborhood school, so as to learn how to read and write, to understand simple arithmetic and to take down dictation. He must also be eleven years old and able to memorize the entire Qur'ān.

The courses in the religious institutes represent four years of elementary school study and five years of secondary school

15. 'Inān (1958) pp. 284-293; 'Uyūn, pp. 133, 134; Rajab, pp. 71-73; Thālīthah, p. 64; Khaffājī, Vol. II, p. 85.

work. When a boy graduates from an Institute, he is about the same age as a student in Europe or America, who completes a lycée or junior college course.

Needless to say the elementary school boys do not study the more complicated material of subjects like jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis, but they do learn the meaning of the ordinances and moral teachings of the Qur'ān. Secondary school pupils, on the other hand, are old enough to commence a scientific study of jurisprudence, commentary, tradition and theology. They also attend courses dealing with subjects of a secular nature, similar to the courses in the government schools.

A boy who completes his secondary school work in one of the religious institutes becomes eligible to enter any one of the three colleges of al-Azhar. Throughout all of the years of study there are examinations and the more advanced students are also obliged to write theses. In the colleges of the University the linguistic, legal and religious courses are so detailed and technical that they require conscientious and thorough work on the part of the student. As has already been mentioned, numerous young professors are being sent to Europe and America, so that they can learn how to adapt these courses to the needs of modern life.

A good example of how a course can be brought up-to-date may be mentioned in connection with philosophy. In 1946 the subjects for an examination in philosophy were as follows: the fundamental beliefs of the Mu'tazilah and their influence on theology; the Alexandrian philosophers and their influence on Muslim thought; the position of al-Ghazzālī between philosophy and mysticism; the unity of certain aspects of philosophy and mysticism; a comparison between the scholars of logic and jurisprudence; Aristotle's theism and its influence on Islām. At the present time Dr. Muḥammad al-Bahay, who studied at Berlin and Hamburg, not only teaches the traditional Greek and Muslim philosophy, but also deals with the ideas of modern scholars. In a very interesting textbook recently published, he devotes a great deal of space to European systems of philosophy, Communism and the ideas of Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl.

Other subjects like psychology, sociology and political history are being revised in a similar way, as teachers become available to introduce new methods. Although it is not likely that there will be specialized study in connection with subjects like physics, chemistry and biology, there are introductory courses in these subjects, with work in the laboratories as well as the classrooms.

The curriculum¹⁶ is official and not subject to many variations, as important changes must be approved, not only by the Council of al-Azhar but also by a government ministry. Such innovations as do occur are usually in connection with textbooks and methods of instruction, rather than with changes in the program of courses.

Since printing has become inexpensive, the students can now procure cheap textbooks, so that it is unnecessary for a professor to dictate his notes in a mediaeval way. It is only very recently, however, that textbooks have become somewhat modernized. During the academic year 1953-1954, when Professor Jörg Kraemer was allowed to visit al-Azhar, he witnessed an indignation meeting attended by students, protesting against their old-fashioned textbooks, called "Yellow Books."¹⁷

In former times the students were given the whole of the month of Ramaḍān as a holiday, but now classes are held throughout the month from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., the only holiday being for the celebration of the feast at the end of the fast. The many improvements which are being made are encouraging students to come to al-Azhar. In September, 1959 for instance, 550 new students enrolled in the College of Theology while 250 others were refused admission because of lack of space.

According to what a former student remembers, his classes were scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., except in Ramaḍān. On many days of the week he attended classes on five different subjects, usually with about forty students in each classroom. During the third and fourth years of his undergraduate life he was required to write a paper, about forty pages in length on some subject connected with his studies.

During our atomic age when most of the young men are studying technical subjects, al-Azhar upholds the importance of the liberal arts and the spiritual aspects of modern culture. Although many changes have already been made and others are sure to follow, it seems certain that the curriculum will continue to be devoted for the most part to courses of a religious, legal and literary nature.

The Library

It has already been mentioned that there were 18,564 manuscripts and books at al-Azhar during the middle of the nineteenth

16. See Appendix VI for the detailed curriculum.

17. Kraemer, p. 381. See also the whole article for notes about the studies.

century. As these books were scattered about among the lodging quarters and badly neglected, the authorities decided to establish a central university library.¹⁸ Accordingly, in 1897 the *Dīwān al-Awqāf* placed wooden bookcases with glass doors in the colleges of Āqbughā and Ṭaybars, making these old Mamlūk buildings available for the new Library of al-Azhar.¹⁹

Many of the authorities in the residential units hesitated to transfer their books to the new center, those in *Riwāq al-Ṣa'īdah*, for instance, holding on to their books until 1936. Before the beginning of the Second World War, however, the Library of al-Azhar was well established.

As the guardians of some of the city mosques had no idea of the value of their manuscripts, an effort was made to move as many old documents as possible to al-Azhar. Numerous individuals also presented their private collections, twelve of which, donated by the heirs of shaykhs and pashas, were especially important. By 1936 the number of books had increased so much that many of them were placed in part of the new administration building. The Library of al-Azhar set such a good example that collections were also made in the religious institutes, the most important ones being formed at Alexandria, Damietta and Ṭanṭā.

Some of the manuscripts are very valuable, especially those connected with mediaeval studies. There are also beautiful copies of the Qur'ān, one of which was transcribed six years after William the Conqueror invaded England. Before he died, King Fu'ād added to the collection by giving a series of Ottoman edicts, the oldest of which was written at the end of the sixteenth century.

When the Library was first started there were only four employees, with an equal number of shaykhs to serve as advisors. The Librarian received ten pounds a month; the annual budget was 314 pounds. By the time that al-Azhar was reorganized as a university in 1936, the budget had increased to 1,448 Egyptian pounds and there were ten employees, including two typists. When the present Librarian²⁰ was appointed in 1943, he started to compile a catalogue, which was finished in 1950.

18. Marāghī (abū-al-Wafā') first part; Rajab, pp. 74, 75; Bayram, pp. 46, 47; Yūnus, pp. 140-151; Wāfi, pp. 46-48; Khaffājī, Vol. II, pp. 147-154.

19. *al-Maktabah al-Azhariyah*. The shaykhs chiefly responsible for the Library were Hussūnah al-Nawāwī, 'Abd al-Karīm Sulaymān and Muḥammad Ḥasanayn al-'Adawī.

20. The Librarian (*al-Amīn*) is at the present time Shaykh abū-al-Wafā' al-Marāghī.

In 1943 there were 20,000 manuscripts and over 60,000 printed books, dealing with fifty-eight different departments of study.²¹ Sixteen years later in 1959, there were 120,000 volumes in the main Library, in addition to collections in the colleges; 15,000 books, for instance, being in the College of Theology. Any one who visits the Library at the present time must be impressed by the large number of new accessions, especially of recently published Arabic books.

Until a new building can be erected in the rear of the university quadrangle, it is planned to place the Library in the upper story of the Assembly Building. It will greatly strengthen the academic work, if the students are provided with a modern card catalogue, convenient tables for study and a reasonable number of European books to supplement the Arabic ones.

Athletics and Health

In addition to their military training the students are encouraged to take part in various types of athletic games. One member of the Supreme Council has been assigned to develop sports for both the colleges and the religious institutes. In 1956 some 10,000 university men and school boys, representing 29 percent of the total enrollment, engaged in some form of athletics. The twenty acres in Cairo being devoted to sports will contain a swimming tank as well as playing fields.

In 1898 Dr. 'Abbās Hilmī was appointed to supervise the students' health. Six years later a government hospital was established in the quarter of the city in which al-Azhar is located. Finally, in 1929, the present Chief Physician²² was appointed to reorganize the medical work in an efficient way.

When two new buildings were erected on the high land to the east of al-Azhar in 1936, they were large enough to contain a clinic and fifty bed hospital, in addition to the Religious Institute of Cairo. During recent years sixteen specialists from the two government medical schools of Cairo have been giving two hours of their time, four days a week, to the health program. They do not ask for any remuneration other than the cost of

21. There were 8,624 volumes for the Traditions, 17,655 for jurisprudence, 5,277 for commentary, 7,813 for literary study, 5,512 for grammar, 3,838 for theology. Some of the secular subjects were represented as follows: medicine, 632; formation of nations, 303; arithmetic, 505; algebra, 34; geometry, 67; astronomy, 428; commerce, 19; agriculture, 66; foreign languages, 502.

22. Dr. Hasan Aboul-Seoud (Hasan abū-al-Su'ūd), a graduate of the School of Medicine of the American University of Beirut.

transportation. There are also several resident doctors and a staff of senior and junior assistants, who help to conduct the hospital, clinic and pharmacy.

The specialists not only handle different types of medical and surgical cases, but also X-ray work, eye examinations, dentistry and laboratory analysis. There are about 300 cases and 120 laboratory tests to care for each day. Everything is free for the students, even eye glasses and dentistry, the families of teachers and servants also being cared for.

A new hospital, pharmacy and clinic are being built in the city for foreign students. A hundred beds will be made available for patients at the start, with expectations of expanding the hospital in the future. When this new center is completed, the health service can be conducted in a much more satisfactory way than has been possible in the past.

Extension Work

There are four important forms of extension activity conducted by al-Azhar.

In the first place, there is the section for Preaching and Guidance,²³ which arranges for lecturers and preachers to visit communities throughout Egypt, so as to promote good will among the people by strengthening their spiritual faith and encouraging ethical living. The preachers have dispensed with the pedantic old methods of speaking used in the past, making their addresses easy for the uneducated people to understand. They make a special appeal to the women, urging them to raise their standard of living and to bring up their children in an atmosphere of religion.

Preachers similar to evangelists not only work in the peasant communities and town mosques, but also in summer resorts, army camps, refugee centers and factories. In 1949 about 4,600 addresses were given every month, 549 of them being for women. It was estimated that 162,260 women were reached every week. In 1954 the preachers spoke at 57,824 meetings for civilian men, 30,576 for women and 14,560 for members of the armed forces, making a total of 102,960. At the same time 465 mosques were either renovated or built, seven new religious institutes were founded and twenty societies were formed to study the Qur'ān.²⁴

23. *Al-Wa'z wa'l-Irshād*. See 'Uyūn, p. 113.

24. *Nashāt*, p. 22. 'Uyūn, p. 113.

Al-Azhar supports a staff of some 380 preachers and during Ramaḍān members of the faculty and students also give addresses. In 1959 the Voice of al-Azhar was established, enabling the Rector to reach audiences in all parts of the Arabic speaking world.

A second form of extension work consists in holding informal classes for persons who wish to learn what they can about religion. Classes of this sort are able to meet at al-Azhar itself, in the religious institutes or in neighborhood mosques.

A third activity of the extension program is the forming of missions,²⁵ composed of leading shaykhs, who go to foreign lands for short periods of time, in order to give accurate information about Islām. This work is greatly needed in communities of entirely different types.

In lands where Arabic is not spoken, the children do not really understand the tenets of Islām, even though they may memorize a few Quranic verses and formal prayers. In some countries where Arabic is spoken, the peasants are too ignorant to rise above their local superstitions. In many parts of Africa, moreover, the tribesmen have never heard of Muḥammad, while in Europe and America there are inherited prejudices unfriendly to Islām.

The following statistics, published in 1959, give further information about the number of workers being sent abroad. Seventeen were sent to Morocco, Libya, Liberia, Ghānah, Nigeria and Zanzibar; 47 to Lebanon, Syria, Ghazzah, Aden, 'Ammān, Baḥrayn, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand and Japan; one to Germany; eight to Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, New York and Canada, and two to Brazil and Chile, making a total of 75.²⁶

Al-Azhar, moreover, supports cultural institutes in the Sūdān, England and the United States. Dr. 'Alī 'Abd al-Qādir is in charge of the Institute and publication work in London, while Dr. Mahmoud Hoballah²⁷ is directing the new mosque on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington and the Islamic Center attached to it.

The fourth type of extension work is the journal, which was started at the same time that the printing press was established. The first copy appeared during the early summer of 1930 with the title *The Journal of the Light of Islām*. The early copies appeared monthly, each one being about eighty pages in length

25. Bu'ūth.

26. Thālithah, pp. 41, 42. Nashāt, pp. 23, 29.

27. Dr. Maḥmūd Ḥubb-Allāh.

and printed entirely in Arabic. Each issue contained some dozen articles and cost forty piasters a year for the public in Egypt, but only half of that amount for teachers and students of al-Azhar and its Religious Institutes. In addition to material about religious subjects, the early copies contained articles about Wells' famous *Outline of History*, the Muslims of Russia, hygiene and the natural sciences. There were also brief stories and quotations under the heading "Novelties and Witticisms." When Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī became the Rector, he changed the name to *Journal of al-Azhar*, to which he contributed many of his addresses.²⁸

Some of the issues had an English supplement for the Muslims of India and Pakistan, who do not know Arabic. The date on the cover of each monthly issue is given according to the Muslim calendar, but on an inside page a European date is also given. The journal is now about a hundred pages in length, with fifteen principal articles in addition to short inserts. It costs forty piasters in Egypt and fifty piasters abroad, with reductions for teachers and students.

Many of the articles are about religious subjects, but some of them deal with historical and biographical topics; poems and photographs are also included. In the January 1957 issue, for instance, there are poems about the revival of Egypt and the British attack on Port Sa'id. There are also two pictures, one of the Rector receiving the principal representative of the Coptic Church and the other of members of the medical staff serving in the army at the time of the attack on the Canal. As the journal has a far-flung circulation, it does much to stimulate an interest in Islām and to make al-Azhar known throughout the Muslim world.

In addition to these extension activities, al-Azhar maintains an Inspection Bureau,²⁹ which is especially concerned with the Arabic language and (*Sharī'ah*) law. One of the services which it renders is to supply reliable literature, giving accurate information to persons who ask questions.

Another agency is the Fatwā Committee, composed of representatives of all four codes of Sunnite jurisprudence. It serves as an advisory board to give interpretations of a legal nature and

28. See Smith, pp. 122-155; 'Uyūn, pp. 116, 117; Nashāt, pp. 35, 36. The names are, *Majallat Nūr al-Islām* and *Majallat al-Azhar*. The first editor was Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Husayn and the present one is Aḥmad al-Zayyāt.

29. *Idārat al-Taftīsh*.

to issue decisions about matters of public interest. Recently it has been rendering about 350 pronouncements a year.

The influence of al-Azhar is felt also in connection with Quranic schools, which teach the boys the Qur'ān and its ordinances. In 1956 al-Azhar gave direct help, or some form of encouragement, to 4,055 of these schools, which at that time had a total enrollment of 254,221 pupils.³⁰

These extension activities of al-Azhar have an important role to play in the modern world, when Islām is being threatened by superstition and indifference from within and by Communism from without. As in the days of al-Ghazzālī, people need to have their faith made more vital and their worship more spiritual.

Graduates and Former Students

Although accurate statistics are lacking, it is certain that during the Fāṭimid period many of the members of the judicial system and propaganda hierarchy, as well as mosque leaders and teachers, were fitted for their careers at al-Azhar. It is true that some of the students, like the famous Persian Nāṣir-i-Khusraw, only received part of their education in Cairo, while others divided their courses between al-Azhar, the palace, Dār al-Ḥikmah and the neighboring mosques. On the other hand, it is safe to say that al-Azhar was primarily responsible for training many men to fill influential positions in the provincial capitals and towns of the vast realm of the Fāṭimids.

From the time of Saladin to the reign of Baybars the classes at al-Azhar were not supported in a formal way, so that the few men who studied in the mosque cannot have exerted much influence. Even when Baybars revived al-Azhar as a center of higher learning, it was only one of a large number of colleges and mosques devoted to education. Gradually, however, it gained in prestige, so that even though its graduates were only a minority among the educated men of the Mamlūk and Ottoman periods, they were regarded as an élite, greatly honored both in Egypt and in foreign lands. Many of the Arab historians³¹ give detailed information about the personal lives of some of the shaykhs who went forth from al-Azhar, but unfortunately none of them record statistics for the graduates as a whole.

30. Nashrah (1957) pp. 105, 106.

31. Jabartī, Suyūṭī, Maqrīzī, and ibn-Tighrī-Birdī among the earlier authors and also modern ones like Khaffājī, Rajab, and Sharqāwī.

During the time of Muḥammad 'Alī many of the boys, selected to study medicine and other modern subjects, were enlisted from the student body of al-Azhar. Some of the graduates like Muḥammad 'Abduh and Sa'd Zaghālūl became influential in government circles, while a few like al-Jabartī wrote secular books of outstanding importance. Others served as the leading judges, preachers and scholars of their generations, famous for their ability and leadership. Muḥammad ibn-'Alī al-Sanūsī, for instance, studied at al-Azhar for a short time, before he began his great career as the founder of the Sanūsī fraternity.³²

As is the case in other universities, however, the rank and file of the graduates have been conscientious men, devoting their lives to useful but inconspicuous occupations. The majority of them have been teachers of Arabic and religious subjects, or government employees in Egypt. The teachers are in demand because they know the Arabic language thoroughly, as well as the Qur'ān, with the traditions and commentaries which explain it. The government employees are useful for clerical work, because of their knowledge of composition and their reliable characters. Their knowledge of the (*Shari'ah*) law also makes them capable of notary work, even if they do not always succeed in becoming lawyers and judges. Perhaps the graduates who have exerted the greatest influence have been those devoted to preaching and religious education work in the towns and peasant villages of Egypt, where they have filled the mosques, dervisheries and private houses with admiring audiences. Women as well as men have been attracted by their popular form of speaking, the women present remaining behind screens.³³

In speaking about the graduates of al-Azhar, Canon Gairdner explained that most of them were Egyptians, who regarded their studies as a means of procuring a respectable education. Some of them are accustomed to leave the institution after a few years to become Qur'ān reciters or clerks, while others remain a few years longer before dropping out to become shopkeepers and merchants. Those who engage in advanced study take charge of the village mosques, where they call the worshippers to prayer, conduct the Friday services, direct the classes of their local mosque school and give legal information about marriage, divorce, inheritance and other subjects. Some still more advanced alumni teach in the better type of peasant schools, or conduct

32. Ziyādah, p. 39.

33. Ṭawīl, pp. 26, 27.

classes in grammar and religion in the government institutions. The most thoroughly educated become lawyers and judges in the (*Shari'ah*) law courts, or professors at al-Azhar itself.³⁴

Many graduates engage in foreign service. In 1956, for instance, 171 were enlisted to serve in schools and institutes in the following places: al-Ḥijāz, 37; al-Riyād, 30; Kuwayt, 20; the Sūdān, 24; Somaliland, 11; Eritrea, 6; Libya, 5; Lebanon, 12; 'Irāq, 5; Syria, 3; Malaya, 2; India, 2; Ghazzah, 12; France, 2; London, 2; Washington, 2.³⁵

The greatest number of graduates living in countries other than Egypt are those who have studied at al-Azhar as foreign students and then returned to work in their home lands. A few examples illustrate the types of service rendered by these men.

In 1897 Shaykh al-'Abbās founded a private school, which helped to awaken a new spirit among the Muslims of Beirut and was partly responsible for the extensive educational work of their charitable society. At the same time Shaykh Aḥmad al-Maḥmaṣānī devoted himself to teaching and preaching in Lebanon, where he spread Muḥammad 'Abdūh's ideals for revival and reform. Shaykh Shafi'q Yamūt became President of the Higher Shari'ah Court at Beirut, Shaykh 'Abd al-Sattār 'Abd-Allāh was the Chief Judge at Lataqīyah in Syria and 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Shaykh was the permanent undersecretary of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. Recently a former student of al-Azhar has become the leading judge in Lebanon, while Shaykh Ḥāfiẓ Wahbā, after serving as the Saudi Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, has been chosen as one of the two Arab members of the Board of Directors of the Arabian-American Oil Company.

Although most of the students in North Africa go to their local institutions, such as the university at Fās in Morocco, the Zaytūnah in Tunisia and the secular colleges at Algiers and Banghāzī, there are always a large number of North Africans at al-Azhar. There are also many young men coming from lands further to the south. Shortly before the First World War one observer said that there were graduates of al-Azhar in Northern Nigeria, the Sūdān and Central Africa, but not in more distant places. As he explained, they were north of the "fringe from Egyptian territory east, to the Guinea Coast" but not among the tribes to the south. Although there were numerous tribesmen

34. Gairdner, pp. 266, 267.

35. Nashrah (1956) pp. 50-55. See also Nashāt, pp. 25, 26.

from the Hausaland region at al-Azhar, they were invariably pilgrims, seeking shelter at the mosque and work in Cairo.³⁶

During the Ottoman period there were many Turkish graduates, who were of great value in the law courts and mosques because of their knowledge of Arabic. Since, however, Atatürk secularized his country, a negligible number of graduates have gone from al-Azhar to the Turkish Republic. So few Muslims have come to Cairo from Russia and Siberia, that in 1909 there were none of them at al-Azhar. At the present time there are only four graduates in Siberia, two at Bukhārā, a third at Samarqand and a fourth at Tāshqand.³⁷

The graduates and former students in Afghanistan and Pakistān are known for quality rather than quantity. Shaykh Fu'ād Fakhr-al-Dīn, for instance, has been in charge of public works in Afghanistan, while Shaykh abū-al-Ḥasanāt Muḥy-al-Dīn has been a professor at the University of Dacca in East Pakistān.

A recent visitor to Cairo, when telling about the graduates of al-Azhar in India, has said that many of them have an important share in the intellectual and religious movements of their country. Shaykh Muḥammad 'Umrān al-Nadawī, for instance, is Dean of the Dār al-'Ulūm College at Lucknow, Shaykh Muḥammad Islām-al-Dīn is a professor at the University of Calcutta. Two other shaykhs, al-Qādī Muḥammad Maẓhar-al-Dīn Aḥmad and al-Sayyid Muḥy-al-Dīn Ḥasan, are professors at the University of Aligarh, while abū-al-Khayr Muḥammad Ayyūb 'Alī is principal of a provincial high school. These are only a few examples of the illustrious graduates in India.

In writing about Malaya and Indonesia, Dr. Shafik Ghorbal has explained in a recent book that the Muslims of Southeast Asia tend to turn to the center of Muslim culture for spiritual revival.³⁸ Thus they are not only sending many young men as pilgrim-students, to study in the Holy Cities of Arabia, but are also encouraging bright boys to study at al-Azhar. When the men who are now in Cairo return to their homes, they will undoubtedly exert great influence, whether it is in the islands of Indonesia, the states of Malaya, or among the two million Muslims of southern Thailand. It is significant to realize that two former students of al-Azhar have in turn held the position of

36. Gairdner, pp. 270, 271.

37. Information obtained at the Lahore Colloquium from al-Ḥājī Sattiov Ismā'il Mahdūm, Director of the Mir 'Arab Madrasah at Bukhārā.

38. See Morgan, article, p. 83. (Arabic. Trans., Shafiq Ghurbāl.)

Minister for Religious Affairs in Indonesia. One is Shaykh Radayān Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān and the other Shaykh Aḥmad al-Azhārī. The Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistān, Dr. Muḥammad Rasjidi, also studied at al-Azhar.

One of the best known leaders of the large Muslim population of China is Dawood C. M. Ting, who has recently been attached to the Chinese Consulate in Lebanon and was formerly a student of al-Azhar. In 1958 he stated that before the war the schools at Peking, Shanghai and Kunming sent twenty-eight students to al-Azhar, which was the first time that the institution had received students from China.³⁹ Because of the present conditions in China, it is not likely that many students will find their way to Cairo, or that there will be many graduates of al-Azhar in China.

From what has been said it is clear that many former students and alumni of al-Azhar have held positions of leadership, while others have made themselves useful in humble walks of life, keeping alive a knowledge of the Arabic language, an understanding of Islām and an interest in religion. It is impressive to realize that these graduates have served from Siberia to Nigeria and from Morocco to China, their activities beginning before America was discovered, when the people of northern Europe were still barbarians.

39. Morgan, article on China, p. 373.

CHAPTER VIII

Problems of the Future

Educational Problems

FROM what has been said it is evident that al-Azhar is no longer a mosque-college, devoted to defending mediaeval learning. It has now become a university, facing a future which is full of uncertainties. Never before in its long history has the institution been confronted by so many problems.

The Ottoman Caliphate and European imperialism have been replaced by independence. Modern science is upsetting traditional belief. The machine age and the growth of great cities are menacing peasant life, while the emancipation of women and European customs are transforming society. Aristocracy is disappearing, the masses are demanding their rights and Communism threatens to tear down the structure of Muslim civilization.

In most of the Muslim lands secular government schools are taking the place of religious institutions. No longer is al-Azhar a unique center of higher education in Egypt, where four state universities¹ exist at the present time. Modern universities are also being developed in many other Muslim countries, while extensive systems of secular schools are being organized for the younger pupils. In 1958 there were 2,323,000 boys and girls in the elementary and 356,300 in the secondary schools of Egypt, in addition to 78,300 in vocational classes. When compared to the large number of pupils in the government schools, the 31,755 boys in the religious institutes attached to al-Azhar are a small minority.

The question therefore arises, should the curriculum of these religious institutes be made to coincide with the program of the government schools? This problem is already being solved to a certain extent, because religion is being taught at least twice a week in the government schools, while the secular instruction

1. Cairo with nearly 40,000 men and women students, 'Ayn Shams with over 28,000, Alexandria with about 25,000 and Asyūt with over 3,400.

in the religious institutes is being strengthened. Thus the authorities at al-Azhar feel that the two systems are becoming complementary to one another.

A second problem is connected with the College of Law.² In the middle of the nineteenth century the Ottomans started to supplement their system of (*Sharī'ah*) law with statutes based on the Code Napoleon, so as to form their famous new system.³ Needless to say the *Sharī'ah* contained nothing about steamships and railroads, motor cars and aeroplanes, banking and insurance, corporations and petroleum, radio and all of the other inventions of our modern age. Thus systems of secular law have been adopted to meet the demands of modern commerce, industry and transportation. At the same time the (*Sharī'ah*) law itself has been adapted to new developments by means of individual judgment and analogy.⁴ In 1917 the Ottoman Law of Family Rights was issued and in 1949 a new civil code was adopted in Egypt, combining the Islamic law with indigenous customs and Western techniques.⁵

During 1952 and 1953 the Egyptian government placed benevolent endowments under the control of the Ministry of Awqāf and on January 1, 1956 an even more radical step was taken, when cases formerly handled in separate *Sharī'ah* and communal tribunals were centralized in the civil courts.

Because of these changes a legal authority who wishes to be successful must deal with all of the different kinds of cases tried in the centralized courts. Accordingly, jurisprudence is being taught in the modern law schools of the state universities, while students of al-Azhar must study the secular laws as well as the *Sharī'ah*. It is, therefore, planned to expand the College of Law of al-Azhar, so as to form an important center for legal study, able to serve three purposes.

In the first place, it will continue to provide authorities for the (*Sharī'ah*) law, capable to serve as judges or lawyers. In conservative countries where the courts are not centralized, these experts will be attached to the communal tribunals, but in Egypt they will work in the civil courts. In the second place, it will

2. *Kulliyat al-Sharī'ah al-Islāmīyah*.

3. *Tanzīmāt* reforms and new civil code (*al-Majallah*); see *Enc. Isl.* (1913) Vol. III, p. 449; Vol. IV, p. 656.

4. *al-ijtihād* and *al-qiyās*.

5. See article by G. M. Badr in *Revue Egyptienne de Droit International* 1955.

form an important research center for the *Shari'ah*⁶ and, finally, it will function as a modern law school, training men for all kinds of cases in the centralized courts of the United Arab Republic.

In addition to the problems connected with the secondary school curriculum and the College of Law, there is a third one for teachers and students of al-Azhar to solve. In the past the students have been accustomed to depend upon a few textbooks rather than extensive use of the library, relying upon memory, neglecting original thought. Even when writing a thesis it is easier for a student to comment on the ideas of other people than to present original material of his own. This tendency to memorize and imitate is out of place in the new United Arab Republic, which is in urgent need of men with enterprise and initiative.

If the library is modernized and moved to the big floor above the Assembly Hall, it will be an important step in improving the opportunities for study. If, moreover, an increasingly large number of young professors are trained in the universities of Europe and America, it will enable them to introduce new methods of pedagogy. Groups sent abroad for study should include teachers of the religious institutes, as an effort to revise the methods of instruction must begin with the boys in the elementary and secondary school grades.

One Muslim author has pointed out that what is needed is not so much laws and reforms as men, capable to make al-Azhar a vital influence in the world of Islām.⁷ Appreciating the importance of this principle, the Rector has appointed four administrators, who have completed the advanced courses of European universities. Dr. Muḥammad Mādī, in charge of the general administration of the Religious Institutes, and Dr. Muḥammad al-Bahay, who is responsible for the foreign students and deputations, the library and journal, both received their doctorates in Germany. After studying in Paris, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Fahhām has become Dean of the College of the Arabic Language, while Dr. Mahmoud Hoballah, who received his doctorate in England,

6. For development of the *Shari'ah*: *Muslim World*, Oct. 1950 to Oct. 1952, articles by J. N. D. Anderson; Jan. & Apr. 1958, articles by Nadav Safran; Oct. 1958, article by R. H. Nolte. See also *Islamic Review*, March 1949 and June 1952, articles by Subḥī Maḥmaṣānī; Khalaf-Allāh, pp. 381-415, article by A. A. A. Fyzee. For proposed introduction of Shī'ite systems of law into the program of studies, see *Muslim World*, April, 1960, pp. 122-129.

7. 'Arifah, p. 29.

is Dean of the College of Theology, though he is temporarily in Washington.

A very practical problem is connected with the enrollment. How many students should be accepted in the entering classes of the three colleges? The government universities have become so overcrowded that there is an urgent need for one Egyptian institution to form an intellectual élite, by seeking quality rather than quantity. With twenty-two Religious Institutes preparing large numbers of boys for entrance to al-Azhar and the population of Egypt increasing by a half a million every year, the demand for admittance to the colleges is sure to increase. If too many students are admitted, it will be impossible to develop high standards of intellectual initiative and thoroughness in scholarly work. In the past the classes have been so small that individual professors have exerted a moral and intellectual influence over their students in a personal way. If the classes become crowded, it is inevitable that this contact between teacher and pupil will be lost. Thus there is this important question: should al-Azhar open its doors to all of the students able to meet the entrance requirements, or should the enrollment be limited? The future of al-Azhar will to a large extent depend upon the way in which this question is answered.

Islām and Modern Youth

There is another problem of a more general nature: how can al-Azhar maintain its position of leadership by interpreting Islām to the perplexed youth of the atomic age, in a way which will keep their faith strong?

During our times of ardent research and scientific discovery it is significant to realize that the Prophet Muḥammad encouraged his Companions to welcome new ideas by saying to them, "Knowledge is the life of Islām and the support of religion." "Wisdom is the lost camel of the true believer, he should pick it up wherever he finds it."⁸

Unfortunately, however, modern culture does not always appear in the form of wisdom. Too often it is accompanied by lack of faith, materialism and commercialized vice. Many partly educated Muslims are so confused by European influences that they are unable to interpret modern life to their children in a way that is constructive and satisfying.

8. *Muslim World*, July, 1958, p. 196. See also Ṭawīl, pp. 217-224.

A student of education has recently conducted a survey among the pupils of many Egyptian schools. A member of one high school said that "We are—especially in this age—in great need of religious teaching, because there are many things which confuse us, and we do not know whether they are in accord with our religion or not." The director of the survey sums up some of the things which he learned from the school children by saying, "The cultural conditions—segregation, parental interference, economic hardships—are not calculated to further wise decisions and good choices. To these unfavorable conditions must be added the conflict and confusion in the standards and values of the young people themselves. No one can expect adolescents to be clear and definite about their own values when adults are divided in their loyalties and convictions."⁹

In speaking about these conditions, Sir Hamilton Gibb has pointed out that the Egyptians are in danger of becoming cut off from their own past, surrendering themselves to the evil aspects of Western civilization, without deriving from European culture the things which have made it so great.¹⁰

In the past Islām aimed to keep men from worshipping many gods. Today the problem is to keep the youth from losing faith in the one God.

Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl has tried to help the bewildered youth of Islām to understand the age of Bergson, Whitehead and Einstein, as Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh came to the rescue of students who were studying Pasteur and Darwin. Iqbāl encourages scientific research by saying that "Nature is to the Divine Self as character is to the human self." "In our observation of nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship."

In connection with stories like those of the creation, Adam and Eve, and the Flood, Iqbāl explains that "The object of the Qur'ān in dealing with these legends is seldom historical; it nearly always aims at giving them a universal moral and philosophical import." "The Quranic legend of the Fall has nothing to do with the first appearance of man on this planet. Its purpose is rather to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience."¹¹

9. Samaan, pp. 110, 111.

10. Gibb (*Whither Islam*) pp. 153, 154.

11. Iqbāl, pp. 56, 57, 82, 85. The customary transliteration is Mohammad Iqbal.

Iqbāl also says that "Heaven and Hell are two states, not two localities. The description of them in the Qur'ān is a picturing for sense perception of the inner truth."¹² He is equally outspoken about predestination when he says, "To my mind nothing is more alien to the Quranic outlook than the idea that the universe is the temporal working out of a pre-conceived plan."¹³

Iqbāl's method of explaining that the verses of the Qur'ān are concerned with spiritual rather than historical facts is one way of trying to make religion appeal to the youth of our scientific age.

Another means of adjusting Quranic verses to modern conditions is by what is called *al-ijtihād*, or interpretation of the (*Sharī'ah*) law. A distinguished jurist has recently suggested that the Muslim countries should establish an academy, with a permanent staff of legal and scientific experts. This academy, moreover, should be given the power to reinterpret the law in an official way, so as to meet the demands of modern life.¹⁴

Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl goes one step further when he tells how the Turks vested the power of *al-ijtihād* in their parliament and says "Personally I believe the Turkish view is perfectly sound."¹⁵ Statements of this sort suggest how necessary it is going to be for the professors of al-Azhar to help future generations to know how to harmonize the ordinances revealed by Allāh, with the secular laws formed by men.

Many students retain their faith in Islām, because they find that it encourages public welfare as a legitimate expression of religion. This is in keeping with the spirit of the times, which is more practical than mystical. It, moreover, carries out the teachings of the Prophet, who said, "All creatures are the family of God; the most beloved by Him being the most useful to His family."¹⁶

In Lebanon, for instance, a Muslim charitable society¹⁷ supports over fifty elementary schools, a college for boys, a hospital, an orphanage and other forms of work. Although the Muslim graduates and students of the American University of Beirut seldom pray in the mosques, they have had an active share in the

12. Translated from Bahay (*Fikr*) p. 409.

13. Iqbāl, p. 55.

14. *Muslim World*, July, 1958, p. 196.

15. Iqbāl, p. 157. See also pp. 173-176.

16. See *Qur'ān*, Sūrah ii, verse 177; *Filālī*, pp. 1, 31-34; *Franck*, pp. 16-18.

17. *Jam'iyat al-Maqāsīd al-Khayriyah al-Islāmiyah*.

work of this society, as well as in conducting night schools for poor boys and social welfare work for the peasants.

There is danger, however, that religion may become so utilitarian that it goes to extremes. Thus the shaykhs at al-Azhar resent a radical book about religious reform,¹⁸ which attacked the "priestcraft" and social injustice in Egypt, at the same time advocating socialism, birth control, and equality between men and women. What is more serious is when boys and girls, rendered desperate by unemployment and loss of faith, abandon religion for what they consider to be the practical ideals of Communism. It is timely to express religion in terms of philanthropy and social welfare, but only on condition that these practical forms of work are accompanied by spiritual faith and a desire to serve God as well as mankind.

The mention of Communism suggests one more problem, which must be discussed in order to understand the position of al-Azhar. Many people in Africa and Asia are asking: is it really true that there are only two great forces in the modern world, Communism and Western Democracy? Sincere Muslims answer this question by saying that there is a third force—Islām.¹⁹

A true Believer cannot accept Communism, as it opposes faith in Allāh, the validity of the Qur'ān, the rights of private ownership and other fundamental principles of Islām. At the same time a serious minded Muslim cannot endorse all of the Western theories about government, economic affairs and education, as he feels that these doctrines have been responsible for imperial aggression, colonial exploitation and the two most disastrous wars in history. Western institutions, moreover, have failed to solve many important problems connected with race, color, labor, divorce, liquor, vice and graft. Even systems of parliamentary government and the enforcement of the law have been disappointing in many countries of the West. Muslims are therefore reluctant to adopt the methods of the Western world and feel that the Christians of Europe and America should reform their own systems, before criticizing Islām and trying to impose Western ideas upon the East.

Muslim reformers wish to solve their own problems by interpreting foreign ideas in terms which are indigenous and Islamic. In addition to democracy and Communism there *must* be a third

18. Khālīd (*Min Hunā Nabdhā'*).

19. Filālī, p. 11; Paper of Aḥmad Jamāl, Int. Isl. Colloquium, Lahore, 1958.

world system, which is Islām. It is the special responsibility of al-Azhar to provide intellectual and spiritual leadership for this third force in the modern world.

Mention has already been made of a new book, which has been written by Dr. Muḥammad al-Bahay of the Department of Philosophy and is being used by many students at al-Azhar. After analyzing the ideas of numerous Muslim and European intellectual leaders, the author explains that the way to withstand the criticism of persons finding fault with religion and influenced by the subversive propaganda of Communism, is by a revival of the intellectual life of Islām. This revival must be produced by education and preaching. The rebuilding of thought and society in modern Islām cannot be achieved by means of either Western Materialism or Russian Communism. It must be accomplished by taking from the West the best elements of its science and social betterment, revised in an independent way in accordance with the ideals of the Prophet Muḥammad.²⁰

In conclusion Dr. al-Bahay says that "The readjustment of al-Azhar consists in bearing in mind the accomplishment of a mission, which is the understanding of Islām and making it known more perfectly." "It is an individual mission, which no other educational institution can undertake." "Islām in the future will have a strong or a weak influence, as al-Azhar is strong or weak."²¹

The first millennium of one of the oldest existing universities in the world has come to an end. Al-Azhar stands on the threshold of something new and unknown. For ten centuries it has been a place of worship, a refuge for the oppressed and a center of learning. When Baghdād fell in the East and Cordova in the West, al-Azhar kept the torch of wisdom burning. When Islām was threatened by Crusaders and Mongolians, al-Azhar filled men's hearts with courage. During centuries of Mamlūk and Ottoman rule, al-Azhar kept alive a knowledge of the Qur'ān and the language in which it was written. At times of earthquake and civil war, invasion and plague, al-Azhar gave shelter to thou-

20. Dr. al-Bahay mentions the way in which Orientalists have criticized Islām and the evils of colonial exploitation. He devotes sections to al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq, and other Muslim scholars. He analyzes systems like nominalism, empiricism, positivism, the ideas of Karl Marx and communism. He also gives a résumé of Iqbāl's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām*.

21. See Bahay (*Fikr*) pp. 467, 468. The quotations are translated freely.

sands of frightened people. When ignorance and calamity caused Muslim thought to become barren, al-Azhar encouraged the ethical influence of mysticism. During years of foreign rule and the occupation of European armies, the Egyptian people hailed al-Azhar as a champion of patriotism. Although it has had its periods of internal strife and intellectual stagnation, its history is full of achievement.

In this new age of doubt, when the horizon is clouded by so many baffling problems, may Allāh give courage and foresight to the leaders of al-Azhar, that they may guide the youth of Islām to a deeper faith in God and a broader vision of the mysterious modern world.



Entrance to the new university quadrangle.



Students in the new university quadrangle.



Students of Quranic reading in the sanctuary.

Building used for the religious institute of Cairo and hospital.





The minaret and assembly hall of the new university quadrangle.

New university quadrangle, College of the Arabic Language.





Some of the forty residential buildings of the new "city" for foreign students.



Leaving the Mosque by the main gate.

Appendix I

The Rectors of al-Azhar

Al-Azhar was originally administered by a *Mushrif* and later by a *Nāẓir*. During the seventeenth century the position of *Shaykh al-Azhar* was established. The following persons held the position of *Shaykh al-Azhar* or *Rector*.¹

Muḥammad ‘Abd-Allāh al-Khurashī	Mālikī, ?	-1690
Muḥammad al-Nashartī	“	1690-1708
‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Qalīnī	“	1708- ?
Muḥammad Shanan	“	? -1721
Ibrāhīm ibn-Mūsā al-Fayyūmī	“	1721-1725
‘Abd-Allāh al-Shubrāwī	Shāfi‘ī,	1725-1758
Muḥammad ibn-Sālim al-Ḥifnāwī (Ḥifnī)	“	1758-1767
‘Abd-al-Ra’ūf ibn-Muḥammad al-Sajīnī	“	1767-1768
Aḥmad ibn-‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Damanhūrī	“	1768-1778
Aḥmad ibn-Mūsā al-‘Arūsī	“	1778-1793
‘Abd-Allāh al-Sharqāwī	“	1793-1812
Muḥammad al-Shanawānī	“	1812-1818
Muḥammad ibn-Muḥammad al-‘Arūsī	“	1818-1829
Aḥmad ibn-‘Alī al-Damhūjī	“	1829-1830
Ḥasan ibn-Muḥammad al-‘Attār	“	1830-1834
Ḥasan al-Quwaysinī	“	1834-1838
Aḥmad al-Ṣā‘im al-Saftī	“	1838-1847

1. As the Arabic sources give the dates in lunar years, the conversion to the solar calendar may not be entirely accurate. Certain resignations and reappointments are not given in detail. For comparative dates of Muslim and Christian calendars: Haig, pp. 44, 45; Hazard, pp. 44, 45. For the lists of Rectors: Mubārak, Part IV, p. 31; Yūnus, pp. 124-139; Khaffājī, Vol. I, pp. 149-165; ‘Inān (1958) pp. 212-216, 294-297.

Ibrāhīm al-Bājūrī	Shāfi'ī, 1847-1860
1860-1864 a board replaced the Rector.	
Muṣṭafā al-'Arūsī	" 1864-1870
Muḥammad al-'Abbāsī al-Mahdī	Ḥanafī, 1870-1886
Shams-al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Imbābī	Shāfi'ī, 1886-1895
He also served during 1882.	
Ḥassūnah al-Nawāwī	Ḥanafī, 1895-1899
'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Quṭb al-Nawāwī	" 1899
Salīm al-Bishrī	Mālikī, 1899-1902
'Alī Muḥammad al-Biblāwī	" 1902-1905
'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shirbīnī	Shāfi'ī, 1905-1906
Ḥassūnah al-Nawāwī, second term	Ḥanafī, 1906-1909
Salīm al-Bishrī, second term	Mālikī, 1909-1917
Muḥammad abū-al-Faḍl al-Jizāwī	" 1917-1927
Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī	Ḥanafī, 1927-1929
Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī al-Zawāhirī	Shāfi'ī, 1929-1935
Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, second term	Ḥanafī, 1935-1945
Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāziq	" 1945-1947
Muḥammad Ma'mūn al-Shinnāwī	" 1948-1950
'Abd al-Majīd Salīm	" 1950-1951
Ibrāhīm Ḥamrūsh	" 1951-1952
'Abd al-Majīd Salīm, second term	" 1952
Muḥammad al-Khaḍir Ḥusayn	Mālikī, 1952-1954
'Abd-al-Raḥmān Tāj	Ḥanafī, 1954-1958
Maḥmūd Shaltūt	" 1958-

Appendix II

The Mosque

The Gateways

The area of the mosque without its annexes is 11,380 square meters. Access to this compound is through the following gateways:¹

1. Bāb al-Mizayyinīn, "The Barbers' Gate," which is the main entrance.
2. Bāb al-Maghāribah, "Gate of the North Africans," leading from a side street to the right-hand side of the open court.
3. Bāb al-Shawwām, "Gate of the Syrians," between the same side street and the original sanctuary.
4. Bāb al-Ṣa'ā'idah, "Gate of the People of Upper Egypt," built by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhudā in the rear corner of the right-hand side of the mosque.
5. Bāb al-Shurbah, "The Soup Gate," also built by Katkhudā, connecting his new sanctuary with the kitchen in the rear of the mosque.²
6. Bāb al-Jawharīyah, "Gate of Jawhar's College," connecting the school room built by Jawhar al-Qunuqbāyī with the side street on the left-hand side of the mosque.
7. Before the Riwāq al-Ḥaramayn was abandoned, there was a doorway leading to it from the rear of the mosque.
8. When Riwāq al-'Abbāsī was built, a gateway was made between it and the College of Ṭaybars, opening out to the front square.

1. 'Uyūn, p. 8.

2. A terrace for serving food was built in the rear of the Katkhudā sanctuary, connecting with the door to the kitchen. At the end of the terrace there was a tomb, erroneously called that of Sitt Nafisah.

9. Somewhat recently doorways have been inserted so as to enable students to go out from the residential units on the right-hand side of the mosque to the side street.

(There are also many gateways and doors for the new buildings constructed outside of the mosque enclosure.)

The Minarets

1. Minaret of Āqbughā, adjacent to his college, the oldest one still standing.
2. Minaret built by Qā'it-Bāy, to the right of the main entrance, replacing the one erected about 1420 A.D.
3. Minaret built by al-Ghawrī, in the right-hand corner of the open court. It is double-headed and the highest of the minarets.
4. Minaret built by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhudā near his tomb, at the south corner of the mosque enclosure.
5. Minaret also built by Katkhudā near Bāb Shurbah, behind his new sanctuary.
6. Minaret built by Katkhudā near the main entrance, torn down in 1896.

(There are also new minarets in the university quadrangle and city for the foreign students.)

Appendix III

Textbooks and Certificates

Textbooks (Eighteenth Century)

As detailed information about textbooks is given elsewhere,¹ only a few supplementary notes are included in this appendix, which deals with the eighteenth century.

1. Grammar: a different commentary² on some standard work on syntax was, as a rule, studied each year for five years, with notes to supplement the text. Then during several years there was a study of *al-Ashmūnī*, followed by a final year or two spent in mastering *al-Mughnī*. In the meantime, at least one book on *ṣarf* was studied, so as to understand conjugation, declension, inflection and similar subjects.³
2. Rhetoric: two books with notes, followed by several explanatory treatises and a textbook on all branches of the subject.⁴
3. Logic (*al-Mantiq*): three books with notes, explanations and abridgements.
4. Theology (*al-Tawḥīd*, *al-Kalām*, or *Uṣūl al-Dīn*): four books with explanations.
5. Fundamentals of Jurisprudence (*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*): a large textbook with an explanatory treatise and notes, also a book about the *uṣūl* of *al-Shāfi'ī* and works on the four orthodox codes of jurisprudence.
6. Traditions (*al-Ḥadīth*): seven books including the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *al-Bukhārī*, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of *Muslim*, the *Muwattā'* of *Mālik* and several books to explain technical terms.

1. Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 41-65. Mubārak, Part IV, pp. 27, 28. *Enc. Isl.* (1913) Vol. I, pp. 537, 538.

2. This type of commentary is not to be confused with exegesis (*al-tafsīr*).

3. Grammar is divided between *al-naḥw*, *al-ṣarf* and *al-waḍ'*.

4. The branches of rhetoric are: *al-ma'ānī*, *al-bayān* and *al-baḍī'*.

7. Exegesis or Commentary (*al-Tafsīr*): the works of al-Jalālayn, al-Bayḍāwī, abū-al-Su'ūd and other authors.
8. The law (*al-Fiqh*): each student studied the books of his own code; for the code of Mālik, eight legal commentaries; for that of al-Shāfi'ī, five; for the code of abu-Ḥanīfah, four with explanatory treatises; for ibn-Ḥanbal, three legal commentaries.
9. Laws of Inheritance (*al-Farā'id*): a number of technical books.
10. Mysticism (*al-Taṣawwuf*): a number of specialized works.
11. Readings (*al-Qirā'āt*): practical manuals for the different systems of reading the Qur'ān.
12. Calculation of the Calendar (*al-Mīqāt*): also a number of technical manuals.
13. Polemics (*Ādāb al-Baḥth*): a number of texts for students electing the course.
14. Philosophy (*al-Ḥikmah* or *al-Falsafah*): books on Greek learning were studied with private teachers.
15. History, belles-lettres, foreign languages, mathematics and astronomy were neglected, being studied only with special teachers.

Examples of Certificates

Although no official diploma was granted at al-Azhar before 1872, it was the custom for an individual teacher to write a certificate⁵ for a student completing his course. The following is a free translation of a certificate issued in 1410 A.D.⁶

"This testimonial is a certificate issued by al-Shaykh Shams-al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn-'Abd al-Dā'im to his 'son' abū-al-'Abbās, whose name is Najm-al-Dīn abū-al-Faṭḥ, certifying to his skill in memorizing the book of al-Nawawī on jurisprudence during the year of the Hijrah 813." "This illustrious authority on jurisprudence is shown to be a descendant of illustrious ancestors and a child of parents of the same type, possessing a lofty purpose, intelligent understanding and brilliant initiative—Najm-al-Dīn—

5. *al-ijāzah*.

6. Khaffājī, Vol. II, pp. 61, 62.

may Allāh find him to be profitable and gather together for him from among the benefits of learning and its heritage, numerous studies included in *al-Minhāj*, which was written by the client of Allāh, abū-Zakariyā' ibn-Sharaf ibn-Murī al-Nawawī⁷ about the jurisprudence of the Imām al-Shāfi'ī al-Muṭṭalibī, may Allāh be well pleased with him and care for him. May Allāh the Almighty water his (the student's) productivity and make the garden (heaven) his abode. As Allāh has opened for him with accuracy and ability the way, *al-minhāj*, of righteousness, so may he guide him to remember heaven as he has fixed in his memory this book."

Date.

Signature.

It is interesting to compare this fifteenth century certificate with the following example, which was written in 1866.⁸

"In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate; thanks be to Allāh, Lord of Mankind, with mercy and peace for the most noble of the apostles, our Master Muḥammad, and for the members of his family, as well as for all of his Companions.

"The brother in serving Allāh, the learned shaykh and scholar, the man of learning and profound thinker, the person of understanding, the Shaykh Nāfi' Khaffājī ibn-al-Jawharī al-Talbānī has requested me to give him a certificate for completing my courses with their ideas and quotations in the fields of jurisprudence, the traditions, commentary, and also legal interpretation and instruction. After becoming acquainted with his ability in these subjects I declare that I certify him for all of the learning that I have quoted from my own professors and I also testify to his piety towards and his observance of the ordinances of the Law of the Apostle of Allāh, to whom may Allāh grant mercy and peace. Furthermore, he seeks what is best in speech and action and will not forget me in the bounty of his prayers.

"Issued in the year one thousand, two hundred, three and eighty, during the month of Jamādā al-Ākhirah; may Allāh show mercy to our Master Muḥammad, to the members of his family and to his Companions. With greetings from the lowly before Allāh, the Almighty,

"Alī ibn-Aḥmad al-Rahbīnī, the servant of learning in al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf."

7. Al-Nawawī, 1233-1277, was a great jurist whose grammar was called *al-Minhāj* (The Way). *Enc. Isl.* (1913) Vol. III, p. 884.

8. Khaffājī, Vol. II, p. 63.

This certificate was probably written by a shaykh who was attached both to al-Azhar in Cairo and the great mosque in Jerusalem.

After the reform of 1872 an official diploma was adopted called *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah*. The diploma of this type conferred upon the young Muḥammad ‘Abduh in 1877 contained eight lines of Arabic handwriting, with the seal of the Khedive Ismā‘il in the lower left-hand corner. It was written in a verbose and flowery way, granting Muḥammad ‘Abduh second grade and recognizing him as a shaykh and an *‘ālim*.⁹

A modern diploma is very different from an old one. It is inscribed on good material, written in a brief way. On the top of a diploma issued in 1940 there is the inscription, "In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Below this there is a formal reference to the government, as well as the administration of al-Azhar, after which there is the statement: "There has merited this diploma the scholar Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Khaffājī, who was born in the year 1915 at Talbānah in the province of al-Manṣūrah and the county of al-Dafhiliyah and who has succeeded in passing the examinations held in the year 1359 of the Hījah, or 1940 of the Messiah. I invoke Allāh to prosper him in the service of learning and religion.

Shaykh al-Jāmi‘ al-Azhar
Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī.”¹⁰

9. Amīn (Md. ‘Abduh; *Essai*) p. 6.

10. Khaffājī, Vol. II, p. 80.

Appendix IV

Principal Units of the Riwāq System

The list which follows gives the names of the principal units of the *riwāq* system, starting in the rear of the mosque and passing clockwise around the central court.¹

1. *Riwāq al-Ḥaramayn* for students from the region of the holy cities of Arabia, entered by a door in the extreme rear of the mosque, to the right of the pulpit. It had a lower chamber and three upper ones, but few students came from Arabia to occupy them. Twelve and a quarter loaves were distributed every two days. Later it was moved to al-Riwāq al-‘Abbāsī.
2. *Riwāq al-Ṣa‘ā’idah* for the students of Upper Egypt, in the rear right-hand corner of the mosque, built by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Katkhudā in the middle of the eighteenth century. About a thousand students were connected with it, but they did not all sleep in the mosque. In the basement there was a large water wheel, with wash rooms and latrines. On a higher level there was space for lockers, a library and kitchen. Twenty steps above the ground there were the main rooms. In order to be eligible to receive the bread ration a student was obliged to join at least a few classes. Katkhudā established *awqāf* to pay for giving the students the “big ration,” which during his time was two loaves a day for each student listed in the register. The loaves used at al-Azhar were not like modern European ones, but were the round, hollow cakes of bread still baked in the ovens of the Middle East.

Whenever a student left, a boy whose name was on the waiting list took his place. A second *waqf* or endowment was established by Muḥammad Pasha abū-Sulṭān. It provided two loaves a day for a hundred additional students, three loaves for twenty-six teachers, twenty for the Rector,

1. The plural of *riwāq* is *arwiqah*. The best map is in *Baedeker* (1908) p. 52. See also *Enc. Isl.* (1913) Vol. I, p. 533; (1958) Vol. I, p. 816; Khaffājī, Vol. II, pp. 97-102; Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 25-28; Arminjon, pp. 60, 69, 71; Yūnus, pp. 48-58.

seven for the shaykh of one of the codes of jurisprudence, and four for the head of the *riwāq*. The principal fund was invested in a hundred and fifty acres of rich farm land near al-Minyah.

3. *Riwāq al-Dakārīnah* (al-Dakārīnah) for students from Takrūr, Sinnār, Dārfūr and other places in the Sūdān and Central Africa. It was a large room renovated by Katkhudā and located to the right of his new sanctuary. Thirty-three loaves a day were distributed to the students.
4. *Riwāq al-Shawwām* for students from Syria, including the regions of Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon. It was to the right of the old sanctuary in spacious rooms renovated by Katkhudā, comprising upstairs chambers, a library, a kitchen, wash rooms and latrines, with a well for supplying water. The endowments supported a distribution of 856 loaves of bread every day. It was also the headquarters of the students of the Ḥanafī code of jurisprudence. In the 1958 edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islām* it is recorded that "A catalogue of more than 2000 works belonging to the 'riwāk of the Syrians,' probably at al-Azhar, exists in a manuscript of the 18th century (Bibl. Nat. de Paris, No. 4 476 Slane)."
5. *Riwāq al-Jāwah* for Indonesians, to the right of the old sanctuary. It had a collection of books, but was small, only providing eleven loaves every two days.
6. *Riwāq al-Sulaymānīyah* for students from Afghanistān and Khurāsān, with five rooms to the right of the old sanctuary. It had a library and provided forty loaves a day.
7. *Riwāq al-Maghāribah* for students from North Africa, located on the right-hand side of the open court. In addition to the loggias opening to the court, it had rear rooms comprising a big library, kitchen, wash rooms, latrines and a well of water. Every two days 862 loaves were distributed to students of the Mālīkī code of jurisprudence.
8. *Riwāq al-Sinnārīyah* for students from the Blue Nile region of the Sūdān. It was on the right hand side of the central court with its own water supply and upper chambers built by al-'Azīz Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha. It distributed eighty loaves a day. Because of the proximity of the Nile it was an easy matter to construct a well in Cairo, so that this unit and many others had their own supplies of water.
9. *Riwāq al-Atrāk* for all Turkish students including enfranchised Mamlūks. It was first established by Qā'it-Bāy

and later enlarged by 'Uthmān Katkhudā. It had twelve living spaces, including the loggias which opened out to the right-hand side of the central court. Every two days 256 loaves were given out.

10. *Riwāq al-Burnīyah* (al-Burnāwīyah) for students from the Burnū region of Central Africa. Not more than twenty-four loaves were distributed every two days.
11. *Riwāq al-Jabartīyah* (al-Jabart) founded by an Italian for students from the region of Somaliland, Ethiopia and Jibūtī. It occupied the loggia in the right-hand corner of the open court, with space for lockers. Fifty-one loaves were distributed every two days.
12. *Riwāq al-Yamanīyah* for the students of al-Yaman, located upstairs in the right-hand corner of the mosque and probably built by Qā'it-Bāy, supplying thirty-four loaves every two days. During the twentieth century the students were transferred to rooms in the new building called al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī.
13. *Riwāq al-Akrād* for the Kurds. It was a small unit also in the right-hand corner of the mosque, with lockers and chests downstairs, an upper chamber and a bread dole of sixty-five loaves a day. The students from this unit were also moved to al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī.
14. *Al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī* was the handsome building erected in 1901 by the Khedive 'Abbās Ḥilmī II, in the right-hand corner of the mosque enclosure. On the ground floor there was a spacious and beautiful hall, while upstairs there were committee rooms, offices and also dwelling quarters for the students. As the college buildings constructed by Ṭaybars and Āqbughā were turned into a central library, the students connected with those units were moved to al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī. The structural changes made during the reign of 'Abbās Ḥilmī II made it necessary to move in a similar manner students from the units of al-Akrād, al-Dakārnah, al-Hunūd and al-Baghdādiyīn.
15. *Riwāq al-Hunūd* for students from India. It was reached by stairs to the right of the main gateway of the mosque, comprising rooms on two levels. Thirty loaves of bread were given out every two days. As has just been mentioned, the students from this unit were transferred to al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī.

16. *Riwāq al-Baghdādīyah* (al-Baghdādīyīn) for students of 'Irāq, adjoining Riwāq al-Hunūd, with a kitchen, latrines and a ration of thirty loaves every two days. The students from this unit were also dislodged at the beginning of the twentieth century.
17. *Riwāq al-Ṭaybarsīyah*, the old college to the right of the main entrance to the mosque, built about 1310 A.D. As it enjoyed endowments of its own, it supported a group of students. As this building and the College of Āqbughā were used for a central library, the students connected with them were also moved to the building constructed by 'Abbās Hilmī II.
18. *Riwāq al-Āqbughāwīyah*, to the left of the main entrance in the old college building erected between 1333 and 1340. It was the headquarters of the students of the Mālikī code of jurisprudence, with funds to distribute 138 loaves every two days.
19. *Riwāq al-Buḥayrah* for the students of the North-West Delta region of Egypt. It was a small unit, reached by a door to the left of the entrance to the open court. Every two days 135 loaves were given out. In the course of time the students were moved to al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī.
20. *Riwāq al-Fayyūmīyah* for students from the Egyptian Fayyūm. It was located to the left of the entrance to the open court, 420 loaves being distributed every two days.
21. *Riwāq al-Shanawānīyah* for students of the southern part of the Delta. It was located in the loggia or cloisters, in the left-hand corner of the open court and was also called al-Ajāhirah and al-Wātīyah. Shaykhs belonging to the four legal codes were attached to it.
22. *Riwāq al-Fashnīyah* for the students of Central Egypt. It occupied colonnades on the left hand side of the open court, with an inner space for the storing of chests and other purposes. Eighty to a hundred loaves were given out every two days.
23. *Riwāq al-Ḥanafīyah* for students of the Ḥanafī code of jurisprudence. In 1862 Rātīb Pasha formed this unit by rebuilding an old house at the north corner of the mosque, originally purchased by 'Abbās Hilmī I in the middle of the nineteenth century. Access to the unit was through a sort of tunnel, which started behind Riwāq al-Fashnīyah by the door of the common lavatory. This important *riwāq* was

composed of thirteen rooms, with a library and space for washing facilities. The endowment supported a daily ration of bread and a monthly stipend of money for four categories of students receiving the following assignments: (i) five loaves and ten piasters; (ii) four loaves and eight piasters; (iii) three loaves and six piasters; (iv) two loaves and four piasters.

24. *Riwāq al-Mu‘ammar* for the students of all races and all the sects of Islām. This was a private foundation in the rear left-hand corner of the open court, with funds to supply 430 loaves every two days.
25. *Riwāq al-Barābirah* for students of Berber origin from Nubia, North Africa and other regions. It occupied part of the loggia on the left-hand side of the open court, supplying locker space for forty students and distributing eleven and a quarter loaves of bread every two days.
26. *Riwāq al-Dakārnah Ṣalīḥ* for students of the Lake Chad region of Africa. It was near the rear left-hand corner of the open court, only distributing seventeen and a quarter loaves every two days. In the twentieth century the students were moved to al-Riwāq al-‘Abbāsī.
27. *Riwāq al-Sharqāwīyah* to the left of the original sanctuary, for students from the northeast part of the Delta. As the boys from this locality were at one time crowded into the old college built by Ṭaybars, where they quarrelled with the other students living there, the Shaykh al-Sharqāwī persuaded Ibrāhīm Bāy to provide a special unit for them. As the Rector, al-Sharqāwī, gave lessons to the daughter of Ibrāhīm Bāy, it was easy for him to interest the official in this project. Accordingly, some time between 1793 and 1798, Ibrāhīm seized an old house and re-enforced the roof with a column taken from the Mosque of Baybars. This new unit had an endowment sufficient to support a dole of 345 loaves every two days, but so many boys came from the Delta that only the poorer ones could be helped.
28. *Riwāq al-Jawhariyah* is the little college built by Jawhar al-Qunūqbāyī between 1429 and 1440 and reached by a door on the left-hand side of the rear sanctuary. As it undoubtedly had some funds with which to support a few pupils, it can be counted as a riwāq, although it was not one of the regular residential units of al-Azhar.

29. *Riwāq al-Ḥanābilah* for students of the code of jurisprudence of ibn-Ḥanbal. It was located outside of al-Jawhariyah, first built by 'Uthmān Katkhudā and later made over by Rātib Pasha. It provided 120 loaves every two days for about thirty students.
30. *Riwāq Zāwiyat al-'Umyān*, which cared for some 300 blind boys, most of whom were pupils at al-Azhar. It was outside of al-Jawhariyah, built by 'Uthmān Katkhudā near the other unit which he provided. The roof of the main room was supported by four marble columns and there was also a prayer niche. There were three upper chambers for the boys to live in, as well as a lavatory. This unit is not always included with the others as a former riwāq of al-Azhar.

Baedeker's floor plan of al-Azhar shows a *Riwāq al-Balābisah*, located in the loggia on the left-hand side of the open court, towards the rear. It may be confused with *Riwāq al-Mu'ammār*, which occupied that space and is not mentioned in Baedeker, or it may have been a small extra unit for students from Lower Egypt.

Across the street from al-Azhar is the mosque built by Muḥammad Bāy abū-al-Dhahab before he died in 1775. At one time fifty Turcoman students lived there, each with a cell of his own, furnished with rugs and divans. Although this mosque was not directly connected with al-Azhar, it must have served as a very useful part of the residential system.

One can appreciate how extensive this old system was by realizing that there were 18,482 books in the libraries of the various units, before the central library of al-Azhar was established.

During the first half of the twentieth century many of the units were torn down or altered, so that the students attached to them either moved to al-Riwāq al-'Abbāsī, or else found lodgings outside of the mosque.

The list given above does not include the thirteen supplementary units, each one of which was called a *ḥarah*. They provided spaces where small groups of students could store their chests and undoubtedly had some funds with which to help the needy boys. As they were relatively unimportant, it does not seem necessary to list their names.²

2. See Khaffājī, Vol. II, p. 102.

In 1936 two large buildings were erected to the east of al-Azhar. As they have been used for the school boys of the Religious Institute of Cairo, these younger students have been provided for, independently of the *riwāq* system.

Mention has already been made of the splendid City of Islamic Missions, or *Madīnat al-Bu'ūth al-Islāmīyah*, which is being completed a thousand lunar years after higher education was started at al-Azhar. Situated on high ground a mile and a half north of al-Azhar it comprises forty residential buildings, four stories high. On each of the three upper stories there are two dormitories, with ten half open, two bed cubicles composing each dormitory. Thus forty students can live on each floor, or 120 in the building as a whole. The forty buildings can therefore hold 4,800 students.

In every one of the buildings there is also a dining room, kitchen, study room and modern bathroom, with a laundry on the roof. In addition to the residential buildings there is a mosque for prayer, with a hospital and clinic, as well as a swimming tank and athletic fields. Because, moreover, a foreign student will receive from five to as much as nine pounds a month, depending upon his grade, the life in this new "city" will be a great contrast to the ascetic existence of the past.

Although this new "city" is taking the place of the old *riwāq* system for the foreign students, they are still classified as belonging to units for administrative purposes. The names of these units used in modern times are given with the statistics for foreign students in Appendix V.

A few local students may continue to live in the old rooms, opening to a rear street on the south side of al-Azhar, but it is probable that the great loggias on the right and left sides of the open court can be cleared of student chests, so as to give the mosque an appearance of spaciousness and dignity.³

3. References for the *riwāq* system: 'Alī Mubārak, Part IV, pp. 20-25. *Enc. Isl.* (1913) Vol. I, p. 533; (1958) Vol. I, p. 816. Khaffāji, Vol. II, p. 97-102. Rajab, pp. 25, 26. Yūnus, pp. 48-58. *Baedeke* (1908) p. 52 map. Heyworth-Dunne, pp. 25-28, 35-39. Majlis Idārah, p. 48. Lane, p. 217. Arminjon, pp. 60, 69, 71. 'Inān (1958) pp. 300-306.

Appendix V

Enrollment in the Religious Institutes

A. al-Ma'āhid al-Niẓāmīyah, 1957-1958

<i>Location and year of joining al-Azhar</i>	<i>Elementary Course</i>	<i>Secondary Course</i>	<i>Total Enrollment</i>
Northern and Central Delta			
Alexandria—1896	524	535	1,059
Damietta—1896	394	344	738
Dissūq—1896	789	494	1,283
Damanhūr—1954	788	164	952
Kafr al-Shaykh—1951	562	—	562
Al-Manṣūrah—1949	1,244	1,118	2,362
Samannūd—1950	910	429	1,339
Ṭantā—1896	2,232	1,655	3,887
Southern Delta and Cairo			
Shibin al-Kawm—1937	533	399	932
Zaqāzīq—1930	1,175	1,021	2,196
Banhā—1954	491	71	562
Minūf—1953	816	484	1,300
Cairo, reorganized—1930	1,614	1,774	3,388
The South of Cairo			
Fayyūm—1954	413	187	600
Banī-Suwayf—1954	498	39	537
Al-Minyah—1949	249	351	600
Asyūt—1930	689	517	1,206
Jirjā—1951	422	277	699
Sūhāj—1946	532	597	1,129
Qinā—1938	407	457	864
Total	15,282	10,913	26,195

During the academic year 1958-1959, the number of these religious institutes was increased to twenty-two. During the

autumn the total enrollment was 27,239 and at mid-year it reached 27,689.¹

B. al-Ma'āhid al-Ḥurrah

There are seventeen of these schools in different parts of Egypt. They do not form an integral part of the system of al-Azhar, but are conducted under its auspices. Three of them each have an enrollment of about 500, seven have over 200 and the others at least 100. During the autumn of 1958-1959 the total enrollment was 4,516 and at mid-year it reached 4,522. As most of these schools are located in towns which are only known by persons intimately acquainted with Egypt, it seems to be unnecessary to give further details.

Foreign Student Enrollment, 1958-1959

<i>Riwāq</i> ²	Country	For. Stud.	Rel. Inst.	Law	Theol.	Arts	Total
Indonesia	Philippines . .	30	—	1	1	—	32
	Indonesia	73	1	21	10	6	111
	Malaya	16	2	14	6	3	41
	Thailand	9	—	2	—	1	12
Al-Hunūd	India	8	2	1	4	6	21
	Burma	2	—	—	—	—	2
Al-Bakistān	Pakistān	2	—	1	—	5	8
Al-Ḥaramayn	Saudi Arabia .	3	—	—	1	1	5
Al-Āfghān	Afghanistān . .	5	—	—	2	—	7
Al-Baghdādah	Kurds	10	—	—	—	—	10
	ʿIrāq	14	—	10	—	4	28
	Baḥarayn	3	1	—	—	—	4
	Kuwayt	—	—	10	3	3	16
	Irān	1	—	—	—	—	1
Al-Atrāk	Turkey	32	8	13	9	3	65
	Greece	13	—	—	—	—	13
	Russia	2	—	1	—	1	4
	Yugoslavia . . .	1	—	—	—	—	1

1. Information supplied by al-Azhar and the Ministry of Education. For the dates see Raqm 26.

2. The *riwāq* is not the old residential unit, but a new category used for administrative purposes. "For. Stud." is the special course for foreign students; "Rel. Inst." is the Religious Institute of Cairo, and "Arts" is the College of the Arabic Language. See Thālithah, pp. 30-35; also Nashāt, pp. 30-34.

<i>Riwāq</i> ²	<i>Country</i>	<i>For. Stud.</i>	<i>Rel. Inst.</i>	<i>Law</i>	<i>Theol.</i>	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Total</i>
Al-Atrāk (cont.)	Albania	1	—	—	—	—	1
	Syria	15	—	5	3	—	23
Al-Sulayḥ	Lake Chad . . .	59	2	—	3	—	64
Al-Nūbah	Nubia (Egypt)	77	112	4	5	10	208
	Western Oases	—	8	2	—	2	12
Al-Yaman	Yaman	28	—	2	1	2	33
Al-Shawwām	Palestine	84	30	12	1	15	142
	Jordan	110	5	5	—	10	130
	Syria	13	—	6	—	6	25
	Lebanon	7	—	3	2	7	19
	Lagos	13	—	—	—	—	13
Al-Burnāwīyah	Senegal	137	1	3	2	3	146
	Nigeria	10	—	3	—	—	13
	Ghānah	11	—	—	—	—	11
	Gambia	6	—	—	—	—	6
South Africa	S. Africa	2	1	1	—	—	4
	Uganda	7	—	—	—	—	7
	Zanzibar	7	—	—	—	—	7
Al-Maghāribah	Libya	142	92	10	2	14	260
	Algeria	23	2	2	1	1	29
	Tunisia	11	1	1	—	—	13
	Morocco	8	—	3	1	3	15
Al-Jabart	Ethiopia	57	7	16	3	4	87
	Eritrea	162	13	5	2	2	184
	Somaliland . . .	26	2	4	2	2	36
North Sūdān	Sūdān	323	55	27	29	44	478
Sinnārīyah	“	62	47	56	24	68	257
Dārḥūr	“	70	10	5	9	8	102
East Sūdān	“	10	—	1	—	3	14
South Sūdān	“	8	—	—	—	—	8
Total						2,718

Appendix VI

The Curriculum

A. *The Elementary School Course of the Religious Institutes*¹

Number of hours a week during four years of study

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Years:</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
Quranic laws	5	5	5	5	5
Unity of God	—	1	2	2	2
Biographies of the Prophet and his Companions	1	1	1	1	1
Intoning of the Qur'ān	2	—	—	—	—
Composition	2	2	2	2	2
Grammar: <i>al-naḥw</i>	6	6	6	6	6
<i>al-ṣarf</i>	—	—	1	2	2
Dictation	2	2	1	1	1
Reading and reciting	2	2	2	1	1
Penmanship	2	2	2	2	2
History	—	1	1	1	1
Geography	1	2	—	—	—
Mathematics	5	4	6	6	6
Hygiene	1	1	—	—	—
Design	1	1	1	1	1
Total	30	30	30	30	30
Special Quranic recital for blind boys	—	3	3	3	3

1. For the complete curriculum of the Religious Institutes and Colleges, see Nashrah (1956) pp. 10-23.

B. *The Secondary School Course of the Religious Institutes*

Number of hours a week during five years of study

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Years:</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>	<i>5th</i>
Law and Jurisprudence (al-Fiqh)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Commentary (al-Tafsīr)	—	—	4	4	4	4
Tradition; texts and terminology (al-Hadīth; Matn wa-Muṣṭalaḥ)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Theology (al-Tawḥīd, Uṣūl al-Dīn)	—	—	—	2	3	3
Grammar (al-Naḥw and al-Ṣarf)	7	5	5	5	5	5
Rhetoric (al-Balāghah)	3	2	3	4	3	3
Composition (al-Inshā')	2	2	2	1	1	1
Arabic Literature (Adab al-Lughah)	—	2	2	2	2	2
Prosody and Rhyme (al-'Arūd and al-Qāfiyah)	1	—	—	—	—	—
Reading and Recital (al-Mutāla'ah and al-Muḥfūzāt)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Logic and Debate (al-Mantiq and Adab al-Baḥth)	2	3	—	2	2	2
Physics (al-Ṭabī'ah)	3	2	2	—	—	—
Chemistry (al-Kīmīyā)	—	—	1	—	—	—
Biology ('Ilm al-Ḥayah)	—	1	1	—	—	—
History (al-Tārīkh)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Civics (al-Tarbiyah al-Waṭaniyah)	—	1	—	—	—	—
Geography (al-Jughrāfiyā)	2	2	—	—	—	—
English (al-Lughah al-Injlīziyah)	4	4	4	4	4	4
Military Training (al-Tarbīyah al-'Askariyah)	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	36	36	36	36	36	36

English and Military Training started in 1958-1959.

C. Undergraduate Courses of the University

1. College of the Arabic Language (Liberal Arts Course)

Number of hours a week during four years of study

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Years:</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
Grammar, Syntax (<i>al-Nahw</i>)	3	3	3	3	3
Grammar, Conjugation and Declension (<i>al-Ṣarf</i>)	2	2	2	2	2
Word Development and Construction (<i>Fiqh al-Lughah</i>)	—	—	1	2	
Sources of the Law (Jurisprudence, <i>Uṣūl al-Fiqh</i>)	—	1	—	—	
Composition (<i>al-Inshā'</i>)	1	1	—	—	
Rhetoric (' <i>Ulūm al-Balāghah: al-Bayān, al-Ma'ānī, al-Badī'</i>)	3	3	3	3	
Arabic Literature and its History (<i>al-Ādāb al-'Arabīyah wa Tārīkhuhā</i>)	3	3	3	3	
Commentary (<i>al-Tafsīr</i>)	2	2	—	—	
Tradition (<i>al-Ḥadīth</i>)	1	1	—	—	
Philosophy (<i>al-Falsafah</i>)	—	1	—	—	
Sociology (' <i>Ilm al-Ijtimā'</i>)	1	—	—	—	
Reading (<i>al-Muṭāla'ah</i>)	—	—	1	1	
Comparative Literature (<i>al-Adab al-Maqāran</i>)	—	—	1	1	
Islamic History (<i>al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī</i>)	1	1	—	—	
Islamic Law (<i>al-Fiqh al-Islāmī</i>)	1	1	—	—	
English (<i>al-Lughah al-Injlīzīyah</i>)	3	3	3	4	
Geography (<i>al-Jughrāfiyā</i>)	—	—	1	—	
Logic (<i>al-Mantiq</i>)	1	—	—	—	
Oriental Language	—	—	2	1	
Calligraphy (<i>al-Khaṭṭ</i>)	1	1	—	—	
Elective Course (see next schedule)	—	—	4	4	
Total	23	23	24	24	

Elective Courses:

	<i>Hours a week and year: 3rd 4th</i>	
a. Religious Studies		
Commentary	1	2
Tradition	1	2
Sources of the Law (Jurisprudence)	2	—
	<hr/> 4	<hr/> 4
b. Philosophical Studies		
Philosophy and its History	2	4
Modern Logic	1	—
Psychology	1	—
	<hr/> 4	<hr/> 4
c. Historical Studies		
History of Islamic Dynasties	2	2
History of Islamic Sects	1	2
History of Arabic and Islamic Sciences	1	—
	<hr/> 4	<hr/> 4

The diploma for the undergraduate course of the College of the Arabic Language is *Shahādat al-Dirāsah al-‘Āliyah fī al-Lughah al-‘Arabīyah*.

2. College of Islamic Law

Number of hours a week during four years of study

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Years: 1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
Commentary (al-Tafsīr)	3	3	4	4
Traditions (al-Ḥadīth) with texts, terminology, authorities (matn, muṣṭalaḥ, rijāl) . .	2	3	4	4
Sources of the Law (Jurisprudence) (Uṣūl al-Fiqh)	6	6	6	6
Legal studies (al-Fiqh) with the Principle of Legislation and Comparison of the Codes (Ḥikmat al-Tashrī' wa Muqāranat al-Madhāhib)	6	6	7	7
Logic (al-Mantiq)	3	—	—	—
History of Islamic Legislation (Tārīkh al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī)	—	3	—	—
Philosophy—Legal Decisions, (al-Falsafah—Maqūlāt)	1	—	—	—
The Arabic Language: Syntax, Conjugation and Declension (al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah: al-Naḥw wa'l-Ṣarf)	1	1	1	1
Rhetoric and Literature (al-Balāghah wa'l-Adab)	1	1	1	1
	23	23	23	23

The diploma for this course is *Shahādat al-Dirāsah al-'Āliyah fī al-Sharī'ah*.

3. College of Theology

Number of hours a week during the four years of study

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Years:</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
Theology (al-Tawḥīd)	3	4	4	4	4
Commentary (al-Tafsīr)	4	4	5	5	5
Tradition (al-Haḍīth): texts, terminology, authorities (matn, muṣṭalaḥ, rijāl)	3	3	4	4	4
Logic and Debate (al-Manṭiq wa-Adab al- Baḥth)	5	2	—	—	—
Ethics (al-Akhlāq)	2	2	1	—	—
Philosophy (al-Falsafah)	—	—	3	3	3
Sources of the Law, Jurisprudence (Uṣūl al-Fiqh)	—	2	—	—	—
Islamic History (al-Tārikh al-Islāmī)	1	1	3	3	3
Psychology ('Ilm al-Nafs)	2	2	—	—	—
Grammar (al-Naḥw wa'l-Ṣarf)	1	1	1	1	1
Rhetoric and Literature (al-Balāghah wa'l- Adab)	1	1	1	1	1
English (al-Lughah al-Injlizīyah)	5	5	5	5	5
History of Sects (Tārikh al-Firaq)	—	—	—	—	1
	27	27	27	27	27

The diploma for this course is *Shahādat al-Dirāsah al-Āliyah fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*.

D. Licence Courses of the University

1. Licence Course in Pedagogy (*al-Dirāsah li-Qism Ijāzat al-Tadrīs*): one extra year of study after completing the undergraduate course of one of the Colleges.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hours a week</i>
Psychology of Education (‘Ilm al-Nafs al-Ta’līmī)	1
Pedagogical Practice (al-Tarbiyah al-Ta’līmīyah)	2
System of Egyptian Education (Nizām al-Ta’līm al-Miṣrī)	1
Principals of Education (Uṣūl al-Tarbiyah) and General Methods (al-Ṭuruq al-‘Āmmah)	3
Special Methods of Instruction for the Arabic Language and Religion (Ṭuruq al-Tadrīs al-Khāṣṣah bi-‘Ulūm al-Lughah al-‘Arabīyah wa’l-Dīn)	3
Administration of School Hygiene (Tadbīr al-Siḥḥah al-Madrasī)	1
Arabic Language (al-Lughah al-‘Arabīyah)	4
Penmanship (al-Khaṭṭ)	1
Choice of Drawing (al-Rasm) or Physical Culture (al-Tarbiyah al-Badanīyah)	1

The general diploma is *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ al-Ijāzah fī al-Tadrīs (Ijāzat al-Tadrīs)*. Some of the students obtain special awards for Arabic Studies, Pedagogy and Psychology.

2. Licence Course in Law (*al-Dirāsah fī Qism Ijāzat al-Qaḍā' al-Shar'ī*): two extra years of study for a student who has completed the undergraduate law course.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hours a week and years: 1st 2nd</i>	
Statutes and Regulations of the Personal Status Courts (Qawānīn wa-Lawā'ih Maḥākīm al-Aḥwal al-Shakhṣīyah)	3	3
Legal Contracts (<i>al-Tawthīqāt al-Shar'īyah</i>)	1	1
Legal Procedures and Practices (<i>Ijrā'āt wa Tamrīnāt Qaḍā'īyah</i>)	3	4
Legal Polity (<i>al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyah</i>)	3	4
Private International Law (<i>al-Qānūn al-Dawli al-Khaṣṣ</i>)	—	2
History of Justice and Judges in Islām (<i>Tārikh al-Qaḍā' wa'l-Quḍāh fī al-Islām</i>)	1	—
Constitutional Law (<i>al-Nizām al-Dustūrī</i>)	2	2
Political Economy (<i>al-Iqtisād al-Siyāsī</i>)	2	2
Lectures on (Legal) Medicine (<i>Muḥāḍarāt Ṭibbiyah</i>) ..	1	—
Lectures on Astronomy (<i>Muḥāḍarāt Falakīyah</i>)	2	—
Trusts, Inheritance and Testaments (<i>al-Waqf wa'l-Mirāth wa'l-Waṣīyah</i>)	5	6

The diploma for this course is *al-Shahādah al-'Ālimīyah ma' al-Ijāzah fī al-Sharī'ah*.

3. Licence Course in Preaching and Guidance (*al-Dirāsah li-Qism Ijāzat al-Da'wah wa'l-Irshād*): two extra years of study for a student who has completed the course in Theology.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Hours a week and years:</i>		<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>
The Qur'ān and its Sciences	3	3		
Intoning of the Qur'ān, (Tajwīd al-Qur'ān al-Karīm) ..	1	1		
Tradition (al-Hadīth) and its Sciences	3	3		
The Call to the Way of Allāh and its Methods (al-Da'wah ilā Sabīl Allāh wa-Wasā'iluhā)	2	—		
Preaching and Debate (al-Khaṭābah wa'l-Munāẓarah) ..	1	1		
Creeds, Sects and Codes of Jurisprudence and their Histories (al-Milal wa'l-Nihal wa'l-Madhāhib al-Fiqhiyah wa-Tawārīkhuhā)	3	3		
Heresies and Customs (al-Bida' wa'l-'Ādāt)	1	—		
The Foreign Language already started in the undergraduate course (English)	3	3		
An Oriental Language	3	3		

The diploma is *al-Shahādah al-'Ālimīyah ma' al-Ijāzah fī al-Da'wah wa'l-Irshād*.

E. *Postgraduate Courses to Obtain the Diploma with Title of Professor (Ustādh)*

This advanced study is similar to work for the Doctorate or Ph.D. degree. It represents a minimum of three and a maximum of five years of study and the writing of a thesis. This thesis, which is really a book, is marked "satisfactory" (*murḍī* or *maqḅūl*), "good" (*jayyid*), or "with distinction" (*mumtāz*). Examples of this type of postgraduate work are as follows:

1. College of the Arabic Language.

- (a) Course in Grammar for the diploma of *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ Darajat Ustādh fī al-Naḥw*.

This involves advanced study of Grammar (al-Naḥw, al-Ṣarf and al-Waḍ‘), Word Development and Construction (Fiqh al-Lughah), Prosody (al-‘Arūd), Rhyme (al-Qāfiyah), and Semitic Languages.

- (b) Course in Rhetoric and Literature for the diploma of *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ Darajat Ustādh fī al-Balāghah wa’l-Adab*.

This involves advanced study of Rhetoric, Arabic Literature, Literary Criticism (al-Naqd al-Adabī), Prosody, Rhyme and work in the Semitic Languages.

2. College of al-Sharī‘ah al-Islāmīyah or Muslim Law.

Course in legal studies for the diploma of *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ Darajat Ustādh fī al-Fiqh wa’l-Uṣūl*.

This specialization consists of study of the principles and fundamentals of Jurisprudence, the history of Islamic Law and the differences between the four codes of Sunnite Jurisprudence.

3. College of Theology.

- (a) Course in Theology for the diploma, *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ Darajat Ustādh fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān al-Karīm wa’l-Ḥadīth al-Sharīf*.

This involves specialization in Exegesis and Tradition.

- (b) Course in Theology and Philosophy for the diploma of *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ Darajat Ustādh fī al-Tawḥīd wa’l-Falsafah*.

This represents study in the fields of Theology, Logic, Philosophy and Ethics.

- (c) Course in Islamic History for the diploma of *al-Shahādah al-‘Ālimīyah ma’ Darajat Ustādh fī al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī*.
Specialization in Islamic History and related subjects.

According to the Law of 1936 the Supreme Council of al-Azhar is authorized to confer the rank of Professor (Ustādh) as an honorary degree. During the year 1958-1959 honorary degrees were conferred on two Indonesians: al-Ḥājj ‘Abd al-Malik ‘Abd al-Karīm Amr-Allāh, an outstanding scholar, and Adham Khālid, a reformer and deputy Prime Minister.

F. *Institute of Islamic Missions (Ma’had al-Bu’ūth al-Islāmīyah).*

This is a course for foreign students, unprepared to follow the official curriculum. It is divided among elementary, secondary and higher studies, each being four years in length. Most of the hours are devoted to grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, commentary and tradition, but there are also classes in history, geography, arithmetic and logic. The diploma granted at the end of the course is *Shahādat al-Bu’ūth al-Islāmīyah*.

G. *Institute of Orientation (Ma’had al-Tawjīh).*

Special courses to fit students for special purposes.

H. *Studies in Reading and Intoning the Qur’ān (Darāsāt al-Qirā’āt wa’l-Tajwīd).*

1. Three-year course in the “Readings” (al-Qirā’āt).

2. Four-year course in the “Readings.”

In both courses between 15 and 18 hours a week are devoted to “Readings.” There are also classes in grammar, commentary, design and tradition. The three year course offers some jurisprudence and theology, whereas the four year course omits these subjects and includes rhetoric.

3. One year course in Intoning (al-Tajwīd).

This devotes 4 hours a week to theory and 15 to practice. A few hours are also assigned to religious subjects and the Arabic language.

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